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Charles' Gift

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Charles' Gift

*Salute
to a Maryland House
of 1650*

By HULBERT FOOTNER

ILLUSTRATED



HARPER & BROTHERS *Publishers*

New York and London

1939

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OF
FORT MARY AND HELEN COUNTY, MD.

CHARLES' GIFT

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ILLUSTRATIONS

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Charles' Gift



Photo by Paul Braun

Charles' Gift in April

"Between the trees the plain old house of whitewashed brick looks out with its row of tall windows downstairs and three dormers in the steep roof, a big chimney at each end. It is a full century older than the handsome dwellings we are accustomed to term 'colonial' and it has no architectural pretensions except in its harmonious proportions."



Photo by Paul Brown

*"The dreamed-of stairway with wide, shallow steps
and its big window framing the pear tree."*



Photo by Paul Braun

*"In the big room at night the stillness is like balm
to the spirit. The far end of the room is lost in shadow:
a chair creaks to remind you that there is still sound
in the world, or a mouse scratches delicately behind
the wainscot."*



Photo by Paul Braun

*"The ancient Abundance plum which hangs over
the well in the side yard is always the first to bloom.
More than once we have had the choice experience
of seeing it bloom in a snowstorm; plum petals
vying with snowflakes."*



Photo by Paul Braun

An end window in the big room looking south

"It has windows in each of its four sides, each offering a different rural vista. It's a help (to an author) to have something pleasant to look at out of the window."



Photo by Paul Braunn

From the dormer in my bedroom; northwest wind on the river

*"That little hollow used to be choked up with verdure,
but lately I worked myself up to the point of clearing it
and revealing the seascape to the house."*



Photo by Paul Braun

April sunset

*"The house is built foursquare with the compass
and the front windows look due west. Very fine
sunset effects over the river especially when
the trees are bare."*



Photo by Paul Braun

The main house from the porch of the cottage

"The front yard is bounded by a dark arbor vitae hedge, and behind the hedge rise the big trees that I am so ridiculously fond of because I planted them myself; a pair of wide-spreading elms and a willow that looks a hundred years old whereas its real age is less than a quarter of that."

1917 Castor oil plants and
the first miracle offspring.
Nurse Ellen hiding behind
the chair.



Photo by Arthur Mooney

Photo by Arthur Mooney

1920

"We now had little naked children running up
and down the beach at Charles' Gift, their pale,
pretty bodies making a perfect complement to the
white sand and the verdant background."





Photo by Historic American Buildings Survey

The south front including the "Casa de Playhouse"

"The first principle I laid down (in building the new wing) was that everything must be copied from the existing house; height, width and pitch of the roof; chimneys, dormers, even porch posts."



Photo by Historic American Buildings Survey

The north end of the big room

"Each fireplace is big enough to make your bed in. The fact that they were not constructed by compass and plumb line gives them a special charm. They draw in towards the ceiling with many a casual curve and bulge. Both arches are a little cockeyed and one is bigger than the other."



Photo by Arthur Mooney

1915 After the tornado

"Every tree was blown down with the exception of the old pear."



Photo by Arthur Mooney

1915 The newly built cottage

"I have to pass it every time I go to the river, and that damned roofline has reproached me for twenty-three years."



1918 The cottage as seen from the beach

"Back of the beach stretches a small flat with a few locust trees and black walnuts festooned with honeysuckle. The bog myrtle grows here, also the big showy flowers of the marsh mallow pink or white."



The beach at high tide, 1928; Fred Hampton's alfalfa barn in the distance

"A unique point of rock—there is no other rock anywhere about, which has the effect of forming a shallow curving bay beyond . . . a green and wooded bank."

Chapter I

ON THE FIRST OF APRIL EVERY YEAR I COME HOME. IN southern Maryland the sun is already striking warmly into the brown earth and the naked woods. Early spring has a bad name, but it is a pity to miss any of the show, the boisterous opening numbers have such delicate intermezzi. Our county, Calvert, is a long peninsula lying between Chesapeake Bay and the estuary of the Patuxent River, but during the whole journey down there is no place from which you can see big water, until you come to the brow of the last hill. Here, our arm of the sea is sprung on you with the effect of a fine surprise. It is not a very big hill, only a hundred feet, but as there is nothing higher anywhere about, you have all the feeling of being on top of the world. Even strangers are moved to exclaim with pleasure at the peaceful prospect below, and to one family, in summer or winter, in rain or sun, hazy or crystalline, it is the dearest prospect on earth; home lies down there at the edge of the river. The house used to stick up gaunt as a scarecrow; now it is draped with trees. Some of the fields will be in winter wheat and the sheep turned in to graze; green of young wheat, woolly sheep and sapphire blue of the sea; a very ancient effect and as lovely now as it was in the morning of the world.

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The car passes through a bare lane across the fields. I would like to see the lane lined with trees, but it is useless to suggest it to a practical farmer, for trees "draw" the land. Then through our own gate, where we immediately pass into an untidy jungle of honeysuckle, wild grape, blackberry canes and trees growing according to their own sweet will—volunteer trees grow with twice the enthusiasm of those conscripted from a nursery. We are not practical farmers. One descends into a little hollow, rises on an abrupt turn, and the brooding roof of Charles' Gift comes into view. The roof comes down to within seven feet of the ground on this side, and with its dormer windows and big chimneys it's all you can see.

I tumble out of the car and make a hasty, anxious tour around the yard. Everything in pretty good shape; a few branches lying on the ground; more chickweed, garlic and dandelion in the grass than last year. The willow twigs are as green as chrysopræse and the little yellow leaves putting out; the magnolia grandiflora is justifying its name; one bathes in the scent of violets, for the whole front border is blue with them. I hasten down to the beach for an inspection; the ripples lap the sand as daintily as last year; there is Little Half Pone across the river, and Briscoe's and Sotterly all unchanged. Each year I have the same feeling of grateful surprise upon finding that everything is still there.

Within doors the householder's first act is to sniff anxiously; the air is dead, to be sure, but there is no alarming suggestion of must or dry rot, only a faint animal effluvium, for during the winter the field mice have nosed in and committed their small depredations. Through the upstairs rooms; the roof has not sprung a leak anywhere; down below there is a damp place in the

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cellar, but I will soon trace the source of that. After nearly three hundred years the mortar between the old foundation stones is slowly crumbling out, and we have to keep following it up and cementing it afresh. In all the rooms, how dear is every long-familiar piece of furniture; the picture that will hang slightly askew; the worn place in front of the pantry door. One puts on the house as comfortably as an old suit of clothes.

Throughout the spring and again in the fall, I live here alone. I suspect that I am becoming too fond of it; it's a vice. However, I submit myself to family discipline for half the year. When I am at Charles' Gift my soul is my own—so far as that may be consistent with the exigencies of earning a living. As a matter of fact, I follow almost as exact a routine as the man who goes to his office every day, but I made the routine and I can break it if I want. It is not imposed on me by an alarm clock, an office boss, or the multifarious conventions of society. When you are able to lie in bed as long as you like, you get up early.

This is my day. I start the kitchen fire in the wood burner, put the kettle on, and proceed to the beach in an airy costume. It is delightful to be able to run out-of-doors without dressing for it. There is nobody around; the beach is (almost) as private as my bedroom. While converted to the nudist cult, I have not yet reached the stage of enlightenment where I can share nudity comfortably with the world. Occasionally I am surprised on the beach by a fishing party trolling in a skiff with a kicker, but that's their lookout; everybody in the neighborhood knows of my habit of bathing in the morning. I've been doing it for twenty-five years. Sometimes the seine-haulers lie off my shore in their small cruiser, but

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we're old acquaintances. They who live on the water gaze fascinated at one who trusts himself to it unclothed.

In these twenty-five years I must have gone down to bathe more than five thousand mornings, yet sun, atmosphere, sky, clouds and river are still able to get up new effects for me. The river is a mile and a half wide, with a level, wooded further shore. There are pearl mornings, opal mornings, and diamond mornings. When I awake and hear the foghorn at Cove Point faintly moaning, I know that there will be no river except a little colorless water in the foreground, a white wall in front, and a bit of my own shore trailing away into nothingness on either hand. Marvelous powdery gold effects are created when the sun, rising behind me, begins to pierce the white wall. On days when the south wind blows, a delicate haze lies on the river; or when the northwest wind comes down, it is burnished to an unbearable brightness. Again, after long rain, spent clouds hang low over the scene and it looks wan and chastened. The distant shore of St. Mary's then stands out with surprising distinctness; you discover details you never saw before; it beckons you over. Lately there was a morning that stands out as the most beautiful of them all. Our side of the sky was blanketed under heavy clouds that hid the mounting sun; but over St. Mary's the sky was as blue as a child's eyes, and all the river and the shore were held in an ineffable blue medium so strange and beautiful that it hurt. The two shores symbolized Grief and Hope.

There is always wild life on the river; a great blue heron who rises at my approach and wings by with his long neck neatly folded back between his shoulders; ospreys wheeling over head, and once in a while a school

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of porpoises rolling upstream in their jolly, drunken style; but the wide stream is pretty empty of human craft. It is a pity, because there is fifteen fathoms out there. On week ends a fishing party or two will be anchored over the Lump; an occasional motorboat makes its noisy way down from Broome's Island towards Solomon's; or a lonely sailboat tacks back and forth. Very rarely nowadays do we see a schooner beating downstream because the motor trucks have taken all the freight; and steamboat days have gone forever. During our early years at Charles' Gift the *Ann Aranel* (*Ann Arundel* to you) was our steamboat. Plowing up and down at her appointed hours with her attenuated stack and dingy, tall sides, she was neither beautiful nor speedy, but she belonged to the scene. We had an affection for her, and felt a corresponding sense of loss when she was laid up. During the last morning or two on the beach I have been hearing a steamboat whistle from down Solomon's Island way that stirred me strangely. It echoes the voice of our lost *Ann Aranel*.

I will not pretend that I go in swimming in early April. Once I did; now I have arrived at the age when I refuse to punish myself. Even in April, though, it is highly exhilarating to let the cool airs blow on your skin; to stand in a foot or two of water and splash it over you. I hate cold water in the bathroom and love it on the beach. If there is too lively and too cool an air on bare skin, I merely take a look at the river and go back to the house. Or, I can embark in the skiff and get a workout at the oars. Midday will do just as well for my bath.

Back of the beach stretches a small flat with a few locust trees and black walnuts festooned with honeysuckle. The bog myrtle grows here, also the big showy

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flowers of the marshmallow, pink or white; in addition, our gardener friend, Mr. Mooney, long ago naturalized big clumps of sweet rocket and day lilies to make spring and summer gay. After passing through a gate, a gently rising grass road leads up to the house in a wide curve. On a knoll to the left stands the cottage that we call Dower House. The main house is about three hundred yards from the bank and as I can't afford to keep the whole stretch in grass, my farmer neighbor plants the little field in alfalfa or cowpeas or some other crop that is easy on the eyes.

The front yard is bounded by a dark arbor vitae hedge and beyond the hedge rise the big trees that I am so ridiculously fond of because I planted them; a pair of wide-spreading elms, and a willow that looks a hundred years old whereas its real age is less than a quarter of that. On still days the great willow stands draped to the ground in its foliage like a sculptured tree. Between the trees the plain old house of whitewashed brick looks out with its row of tall windows downstairs and three dormers in the steep roof, a big chimney at each end. It is a full century older than the handsome dwellings we are accustomed to term "colonial," and it has no architectural pretensions except in its harmonious proportions. To the left of the house stands an ancient pear tree, taller than the house itself. Under its spreading branches on one side sits a quaint little log building where we store tools, and under the other side, an old-style garage.

When I get back to the kitchen the kettle is boiling and I proceed to cook breakfast. Like most of my sex, I enjoy messing in the kitchen (when there are no women around to look scornful), whereas women whose job it

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is, generally hate it. Such is human perversity. When I cook I can have everything precisely as I like it, and it is a great advantage to pop it piping hot direct from stove to kitchen table. My dip in the river gives me a sharp appetite, and I count breakfast and the first pipe the high point of the day.

When I am alone I can spread my work in the big living-room where the little House of Burgesses legislated in Puritan days. There is plenty of space here to walk up and down when invention runs dry. One needs to be a flat-dweller for nearly thirty years really to appreciate a big room. It has windows in each of its four sides, each offering a different rural vista. It's a help to have something pleasant to look at out of the window. Each of the big windows has a wide seat, owing to the thickness of the walls; there is no feature that makes a room more inviting. Silhouettes of the various children perched in a window seat rise in my mind, always with a book resting against raised knees.

My special window is the one which provides a glimpse down through the break in the river bank to the water. That slight hollow used to be choked up with verdure, but lately I worked myself up (I have a phobia against cutting anything down) to the point of clearing it, and revealing the little seascape to the house. The picture is the more alluring because it shows only a small part. At the same time I thinned out the trees along the rest of the bank, and we now look at the river through a Japanesque pattern of gnarled locust branches.

The house is built foursquare with the compass, and the front windows look due west. Very fine sunset effects over the river, especially when the trees along the edge

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of the bank are bare. One follows the seasons by the slow progress of the setting sun from southwest to northwest and back again. According to a neighborhood story, in the old days before there were so many trees behind the house, as noon approached all the mules working in the river fields used to keep their eyes fixed on the roof of Charles' Gift. When the shadow of the dormer made a perfect straight line with the bottom of the windows, they stopped and brayed. Twelve o'clock!

Beside my window, I assault the typewriter and the hours pass. Thank God! for work which absorbs one completely—it is so good to come back to earth again and stretch! One of the greatest boons of living in the country is being able to pop out into the sun for a moment or two to see what the gardener is doing, or to have a look at the seed beds. Then back to work. When living alone you can stop for lunch at the right time, which is that moment when the inner man makes himself known. I eat so good a breakfast that the moment doesn't arrive until after two o'clock, an impossible time to lunch *en famille*.

After lunch I give myself to the soil for an hour or so. In early spring this means digging up dandelions, ripple weeds, plantain, dock, and other nameless intruders in my lawn. It is a matter of pride with me that I have at least kept pace with the dandelions, no small feat when it is considered how marvelously equipped is that small flower to survive and spread. If I get through my daily stint at the typewriter in time, I may take another hour in the garden until it is time to clean up for supper.

Every evening I drive up to Miss Jinny's for supper. Miss Jinny is the wife of Mr. Ed, who for twenty-five years has been my standby, and my best friend in Calvert

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County. Their house stands on the highest knoll back from the river, about two miles from Charles' Gift. It is a bare little house, but beautifully tidy; I love it because I am at my ease there. It is because the acquisitive faculty was omitted from Mr. Ed's rich make-up that they are poor. It seems as if it were impossible for a man to "do well" as they say, and at the same time enjoy his life. Mr. Ed chose the latter. As for Miss Jinny, she has a heart of gold. I never knew anybody to whom the time-worn phrase could be so justly applied. She is old now, but she works as hard as ever and as cheerfully, keeping house for Mr. Ed (who is a great baby at home) and their bachelor son, Jake. Yet Miss Jinny finds time to read, too, and she remembers what she has read. She brings out unexpected bits of knowledge from her store just as she produces pots of jelly from the cupboard under the stairs.

I shall not attempt to draw a detailed portrait of Mr. Ed because he will come into this book so often, the reader will soon get to know him. He is a very tall and (until lately) spare old man with magnificent shoulders, and a bold aquiline profile. He speaks in an oddly high-pitched voice with picturesque embellishments of profanity. I am obliged to say that he is a battered-looking specimen, especially after working in the fields or after a day's fishin', to which he is prone, and he chaws tobacco; yet you would never mistake him for other than quality, because of his serene assurance. Mr. Ed would not be abashed in Buckingham Palace.

While Miss Jinny is clearing the table, Mr. Ed borrows a fill from my tobacco pouch and we talk. The only respect in which our tastes differ is that he relishes Amos 'n' Andy on the radio and I do not. I endure

them for his sake. When I can get him started he's a lot better than Amos 'n' Andy. His talk has built up for me a complete picture of the Calvert County of 1875-80 when he was young. Any little thing may start him off. Thunder rumbles in the northwest and he says:

"Did I ever tell you about Ransom Dean and the thunderstorm?"

"No," I say, pricking up my ears, because Mr. Ransom Dean is a rich, crusted character, and this is sure to be good.

"Ransom Dean is a pow'ful religious man," Mr. Ed goes on, "and also a mighty cusser. The two things often go together."

"Is he better than you?" I ask.

"Sho! I'm not one-two-three with Ransom when it come to cussing. . . . Ransom is deathly scared of thunderstorms, and when he see a thunderhead rising in the nor'west corner, he gather his family and servants in the kitchen, and make all go down on their knees while he pray. Once I took shelter in his house from a squall and I see it myself; Ransom on his knees on the kitchen floor lifting up that graveyard voice of his. You've heard it. Seems to rise up out of the cellar. And his three daughters and their ma kneeling behind him, all the negro hands, male and female, kneeling other side the kitchen.

"'Oh, Lord,' Ransom says, 'Oh, Lord, look down upon Thy servants, and avert Thy wrath from our heads. Oh, Lord! Spare this household, Oh, Lord! Save us from Thy thunder and lightning and tempest!' Then happen he cut his eyes sideways and catch one of the negro hands grinning, and he bust out: 'You blankety-blank black son of a what's-this, take that grin off your face, or I'll flay ev' bit of hide from off your blankety-blank black

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corpus!' And so on and so forth. Then come a sharp crack of thunder and he go on with his prayer all in the same breath. 'Oh, Almighty God, look down upon us in mercy! Spare Thy servants, Lord, and we will glorify Thy name forever!' "

When the dishes are washed, the three of us sit down to a game of cutthroat Five Hundred at the dining-room table. Mr. Ed and I gamble wildly on dummy, while Miss Jinny sits tight until she gets a good hand, and usually ends by beating us both.

I am home again by nine o'clock. I light the green-shaded student lamp and sink into the big sofa under it to read until I grow sleepy. Once, when times were good, we bought the biggest sofa in captivity; it would look ridiculous in a room of average size. In early spring and in the fall, it is drawn up close in front of the fire, and the deep stuffing keeps your back warm while you bask in front. The fireplace is big enough to roast a sheep whole. In summer the sofa is pushed to the other end of the room to get the advantage of cross ventilation. In the big room at night the stillness is like balm to the spirit. The far end of the room is lost in shadow; a chair creaks to remind you that there is still sound in the world, or a mouse scratches delicately behind the wainscot. It is even better when the weather grows mild enough to throw open windows and doors and let in the scents and the sounds of night; the distant barking of a dog, the laugh of a loon on the river, or a little owl mourning in the pear tree. Best of all are the 'tween-season nights when you sit in front of the fire with the windows open. I often light a little fire when there is no

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need of it, just for the companionship of that friendly red eye in the chimney.

Meanwhile, by day, spring is in crescendo. The violets are followed by all the narcissi and jonquils. I do not care for hyacinths; they lack grace, except the wild blue ones which grow in the graveyard out in our field. This is the English bluebell; perhaps the builder of the old house brought it from home three hundred years ago. Twenty years ago, Mr. Mooney sent us six bulbs of a very fine jonquil, a great, pale, scented flower borne on a slender stem. They evidently found conditions at Charles' Gift to their liking, for now we have thousands of blooms every spring. They grow along the curving rock border from the house almost the whole way to the beach. After the jonquils come the tall tulips in the front bed with the dark foliage of the arbor vitae behind, to set them off; and while the tulips are still blooming, both beds come ablaze with peonies, iris, sweet rocket, columbines and roses.

At the same time the shrubs are working out their schedule; we may have flowers every month in the year because the naked jasmine bursts into flower during every mild spell in winter. In the spring forsythia is first; then bridal wreath, japonica, lilacs white and purple, ivory syringa, pink and crimson weigela, deutzia and abelia. Together with the fruit trees. Of these, the ancient Abundance plum which hangs over the well in the side yard is always first. More than once, we have had the choice experience of seeing it bloom in a snow-storm; plum petals vying with snowflakes! Then the two kinds of peach blossoms, tiny flowers of deep pink which make whole orchards blush, and the exquisite, large, pale sort. Once we tried an almond tree, but it bloomed

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too early. How curious it was to discover that the peach and the almond are of the same parentage; one scion educated in the direction of luscious flesh, the other to produce bigger and better kernels. Pear blossoms follow, then cherries, and finally apples. Our ancient pear tree, taller than the house, is a unique sight in blossom. We are sure there was never such another pear tree.

In our latitude the trees come into leaf between the tenth and the twentieth of April, but some weeks pass before the woods assume their solid dress of Lincoln green. All through May they run the whole gamut of greens in lovely disorder, picked out with the red of young maple leaves and certain oaks. As Herman, our man-of-all-work, remarked one day: "May is a wery warigated month." First in the woods to bloom is the fastidious Judas tree, which chooses a spot all by itself and always an effective spot, to flaunt its magenta blossoms. Then at the end of April, all through the woods suddenly the dogwood is holding up its millions of little white saucers to catch the sun. Dogwood blossoms do not open, but start growing in their final form, green and unnoticed at first, blanching in beauty when the proper moment comes. After the dogwood is gone, masses of laurel fill each opening in the woods, white in the full sun, pink in the shade. Old people call it ivory, but this I think does not refer to its color, but is a corruption of the word ivy. Just before they open, the pink buds of the laurel are exactly the same shape as the sugar buds that a professional confectioner squirts all over a birthday cake.

On Friday or Saturday afternoon I hear a familiar horn in the lane, and the family car drives up to the kitchen door and disgorges Mother, the three big girls,

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and tall black Sarah, along with quantities of food. If young Geoff has been lucky enough to obtain a dispensation from Charlotte Hall for the same week end, the family circle is complete. But the gathering on fine week ends is seldom limited to the family, or to one car. The girls will have a Chris, an Eddy or a Jack in tow, and sometimes all three. Then there are the friends of the whole family. We expect to seat about twelve on week ends. We can sleep twelve in the house, and the cottage provides for an overflow of two. The last resource is the three sofas in the big room. A country house, of course, is expected to have the capacity of drawing out like an accordion. One party I remember ran to seventeen, but on that occasion we were forced to engage a room in the village. After a week of solitude, it is delightful to me to see them all sprawling on the grass in the sun, or gathering around the table with sharp teeth. I like it best when we have fried chicken, because that is carved beforehand. When Sunday night comes and they all depart in noise and confusion, my spirits are low for a while. The empty house is like a tomb then. However, I must have the solitude in order to appreciate the company, and vice versa.

Of all the comment that the place has drawn from visitors, that of Maurice Hindus, the Russian, pleased me most. Dr. Horsley Gantt brought Hindus down from Baltimore one Sunday. It was a full week end with people staying in the house, and neighbors dropping in all day. When Hindus left, he said: "This place reminds me of a scene out of Chekhov, people always coming and going."

Chapter II

MY DISCOVERY OF THE PATUXENT RIVER IN 1908 WAS ACCIDENTAL. I was a very new author then, and impecunious, but at least I was no longer chained to the city. It was April and bleak, and my thoughts flew southward; I had no money for railway fare, but I owned a canoe. I started to paddle south from New York via the Raritan and Delaware canal, the Delaware River and so on. I had read a magazine article depicting the charms of tide-water Maryland and Virginia, and my goal was the Rappahannock River. It was the romantic-sounding name which attracted me.

In Baltimore the weather was very bad and the wide spaces of the Chesapeake were definitely impracticable for a canoe. No steamboat left for the Rappahannock for three days, and I walked along Light Street, where the wharves are, asking until I found a vessel ready to go some place. Her destination was the Patuxent River in Maryland. I had never heard of it, but its name, also, was alluring, and I had my canoe carried aboard. The steamboat was an old-time side-wheeler with gigantic paddle boxes decorated with gingerbread work (none of your trifling bucket wheels). She was called the *Westmoreland* and that, too, was pleasing in the ears.

There was a sign in the saloon requesting passengers

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to buy their tickets at the purser's office as soon as the vessel cast off, and I obeyed it. The purser, a gnomelike man, hunched on top of a high stool inside his wicket, asked: "Where do you want to go?" I said: "I don't exactly know"; whereupon he gave me the stare of one unexpectedly confronted with a lunatic. And when he looked at me like that I felt like a lunatic. A little printed map of the route hung alongside the wicket window. Hastily glancing at it, I picked out a name. "Give me a ticket to Pearson's, please." The purser glanced at me in scorn. "We haven't called at Pearson's for seventeen years." I might have replied: "Then why don't you bring your map up to date?" but I didn't think of it until later. However, we reached an understanding. Upon telling him I wanted a place to board near the bay, he suggested Solomon's Island.

I was put off on a mysterious wharf by lantern light, and obtained a temporary lodging. In the morning, to a city man, it was like waking in Paradise. There was something in the scene that made the heart swell; the homeliness, the leisureliness, the sparkle on the water; an unknown need was filled; one had escaped from ugliness. By happy accident it was May 4th, the top of the year in southern Maryland. The river, a mile and a half wide, ran along one side of the island, opening in front to a harbor where whole navies could ride. Through the mouth of the harbor one looked out into the great bay. Only on the clearest days can the farther shore be seen. Behind the island was a harbor for small boats with several deep creeks running into it, each with little creeks of its own; a fascinating maze for the canoeist to explore. Mine was the first canoe to be seen there in the memory of the living.

Chapter Two

The island is shaped like a briar pipe with the bowl pointing toward the mouth of the harbor. The stem of the pipe was connected with the mainland by a rickety bridge in those days; there is a causeway now. A village of oystermen, fishermen and crabbers straggled over the island. Along the stem ran a row of neat wooden houses with palings facing the road and the river, while the back yards were washed by the creek. In every back yard a boat of some sort was building. On the bowl of the island were a few more houses, a couple of stores, the steamboat wharf, and a wide, grassy common edged by a white beach and the river. There were few trees about; and so pronounced was the maritime flavor that it was like being at sea on land.

The village was started in 1867 by one Captain Solomon, who was promoting the first cannery for oysters. He brought the oystermen over from the Eastern Shore. The cannery failed, but the village remained. In 1908 it still bore the stamp of 1867. Of course, all the houses were not so old, but those built since had copied the earlier style. It was like a piece of our grandfather's America left intact. In 1908 only one automobile had ever reached the island. All the children ran out of the school, and Miss Susie, the principal, declared a holiday to save her face. Even today, barring the crowd that overruns it on summer week ends, there is little changed on the island. The beer garden has lately installed a Neon sign that has all the effect of a conflagration.

I obtained board with the wife of the island doctor, whom everybody called Miss Mollie. She was a tall, spare old lady of a rather grim aspect until one looked in her brown eyes and was warmed by her exquisite courtesy. In discussing terms she was apologetic. "Everything is so

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high I declare I have to raise my board. I used to charge four dollars a week, but now I'm very sorry, I have to ask five." It sounded incredible. I knew after one look at her that it was going to be good, and it was. For my five dollars a week I was fed like a prince. In May strawberries were ripe and soft crabs running; and Miss Mollie knew how to make seven different kinds of hot bread. To work at my desk until midafternoon; to go for a long paddle and a swim from a distant beach; to come back with a stinging appetite to one of Miss Mollie's fish suppers followed by green apple sauce and gingerbread—those days will not come again.

Miss Mollie's formula at the supper table was invariable. "Have a little more apple sauce, do, it's real good! Another hot roll, Mr. Footner; they came up right nice tonight." Years after she had become my mother-in-law, she addressed me with the same formality. "Let me know when you're coming down, Mr. Footner, and I'll have a bag of ginger cakes for the children." When Fred Steiff asked her for the recipe of her famous ginger cakes to put in his Maryland cook book, she wrote under it: "This will make enough to last the Doctor for five nights." And it so appears in the book. A woman of character.

Their house was the last one in the row fronting the bay—Chesapeake Avenue, it was officially, but no wheel turned there, because the bank had been cut under by the tide until there was no longer room for a rig to round the corner of Miss Mollie's front fence. The house was a square box painted a distressing shade of yellow—baby yellow, I have heard it called, with a mansard roof under which I slept in those days. Luckily, its ugliness was hidden behind some of the island's most

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umbrageous trees. And the site! there cannot be many dwellings in the land with a finer; that broad harbor with its unbroken green shores and dazzling beaches, busy all day with motorboats and the triangular sails of the rakish Chesapeake Bay canoes and bugeyes; a friendly scene not too grand to live with. The view from the side windows of the house, down across the green common to the river, was almost as fine.

The celebrated Captain John Smith, he whose life was saved by Pocahontas, was the first white man to behold our river. This was in the summer of 1608, before there was a Maryland. He set out from Jamestown, Virginia, to explore Chesapeake Bay in an open barge of less than three tons burden, with a crew of twelve, amongst whom there was "no mariner nor any that had skill to trim the sayles but two saylers and my selfe, the rest being Gentlemen or them were as ignorant in such toyle and labour. Yet necessitie in a short time by good words and examples made them doe that that caused them ever after to feare no colours."

They were in difficulties from the start, having only "a little meale, oatmeale and water to feed us, and scarce halfe sufficient of that . . . provisions we got among the Salvages, and such rootes and fish as we caught by accident and God's direction." The rain spoiled their bread, and storms tore so many holes in their sail the crew was obliged to patch it with their shirts. Finally the men "oft-tyred at the Oares . . . did with continuall complaints importune Captain Smith to returne." Captain John answered them with words that still ring.

What a shame it would be for you to force me to returne,

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scarce able to say where we have beene, nor yet heard of that we were sent to seeke? You cannot say but I shared with you in the worst which is past. For what is to come of lodging, dyet, or whatsoever, I am contented that you allot the worse part to my selfe. As for your feares that I will lose myself in these unknown large waters, or be swallowed up in some stormie gust, abandon these childish feares, for worse than is past is not likely to happen. There is as much danger to returne as to proceede. Regaine therefore your old spirits for returne I will not, if God please, till I have seene the Massawomek (Susquehanna?) Indians, found Patawomek (Potomac River) or the head of this water (Chesapeake Bay) you conceit to be endlesse.

The voyage proceeded.

Unfortunately, Smith has so much to talk about in his book (The Generall Historie of Virginia) that our river gets but scant notice.

The fift river is called Pawtuxunt of a lesse proportion than the rest; but the channel is sixteen fadome deepe in some places. . . . Upon this river dwell the people called Acquintanacksuah, Pawtuxunt and Mattapanient. (Three names for the same tribe.) Two hundred men was the greatest strength that could be perceived. But they inhabit together and not so dispersed as the rest. These of all other we found most civill to give entertainment.

Smith mentions that he promised these Indians to revenge them on the Massawomeks, their enemies, but that "our purposes were crossed."

He noticed the abundance of fish in our river which today has spread the fame of Solomon's Island through the hinterland. "Here are infinit skuls of fish more than elsewhere." In another place he has a good deal to say about fishing. "For want of nets . . . we attempted to

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catch them in a frying-pan, but we found it a bad instrument to catch fish with; neither better fish, more plenty, nor more variety for small fish had any of us euer scene in any place so swimming in the water, but they are not to be caught with frying-pans." Later Captain John solved the problem. "We spyed many fishes lurking in the reedes; our Captaine sporting himself by nailing them to the ground with his sword, set us all a fishing in that manner; thus we tooke more in an houer than we could eate in a day." The sport almost ended in catastrophe.

But it chanced our Captain taking a fish from his sword (not knowing her condition) being much of the fashion of a Thornbacke, but (having) a long tayle like a riding rodde, whereon the middest is a most poisoned sting of two or three inches long, bearded like a saw on each side, which she stricke into the wrist of his arme near an inch and a halfe; no bloud nor wound was seene, but a little blew spot, but the torment was instantly so extreame, that in foure houres had so swollen his hand, arme and shoulder, we all with much sorrow concluded his funerall, and prepared his grave in an island by as himselfe directed, yet it pleased God by a precious oyle Doctor Russell at the first applyed to it with a probe (ere night) his tormenting paine was so well asswaged, that he eate of the fish to his supper.

These stingrays still occasionally come into the harbor at Solomon's, sometimes reaching a size of four feet across. They swim spread out like a table top in the water very often showing a triangular dorsal file which cuts the surface at great speed, causing them to be mistaken with horror for sharks. They are not sharks, but it is sufficiently terrifying to see one of these table tops shoot under the frail canoe in which you are kneeling.

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Our harbor draws in at its mouth between Drum Point, which has a hexagonal lighthouse standing on stilts in the water, and Hog Island Point, which shows a clump of pine trees on its hog back. At evening the sailing vessels stole in under Drum Point to drop anchor for the night, and presently you would see the bluish smoke of the galley fire rising straight up from each cuddy. I have counted as many as sixty-four schooners, pungys and bugeyes lying there; but like other beautiful things the bay craft are yielding to progress; nowadays you will hardly see three or four at a time. A bugeye is a middle-size two-master with a pronounced rake. Its name is a corruption of buckeye. In the beginning the hawseholes were burned out with a hot iron, hence buckeye. Pungys are larger vessels with the same rakish Chesapeake Bay rig.

At a later hour the Maryland moon in her season marched over the harbor from shore to shore, laying a shining path almost to our feet as we sat on the porch at Miss Mollie's. On certain still nights in summer the acalephs or sea nettles rise to the surface of the water, all faintly reflecting the moonlight like baby moons. One never becomes inured to such a prospect. Only yesterday afternoon, stopping by at my father-in-law's house (where Miss Mollie no longer presides) a fresh southerly breeze was dappling the harbor, and I felt the same lift of the heart that I knew thirty years ago.

It is a saying that a third of the state of Maryland lies under water. Certainly the tides have carved an inveigling pattern in our shores. The islands slowly washing under; the long points usually ending in a hook of sand; the abrupt shallows and the deep pools are characteristic of this whole Chesapeake Bay country. The

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banks of the Patuxent are honeycombed with tidal creeks, each having a narrow mouth and spreading out inside like a hand with gnarled fingers crooking deep into the woods; Parson's Creek, Harper's, Cuckold's (now for propriety's sake pronounced Kirkall's), St. John's, Hellen's, three or four Mill Creeks; even now I have not explored them all. The smaller creeks are the stillest and least-touched haunts I know; the shores impenetrably festooned with wild grape, honeysuckle, greenbriar and other inordinate climbers; the water quick with crabs, turtles and the succulent perch. Alongside the loneliest inlets a pair of ospreys will build their untidy nest in the top of a dead tree—there is a myth that they kill the tree before building in it; chattering kingfishers make blue streaks in the sunshine; the little green heron rises with an indignant squawk; and in the farthest dank pool you are apt to find a snowy heron standing on a dead log, an ineffable touch of beauty against the green. The very mud at the edge of these inmost pools is super-mud; mud raised to the nth degree of muddiness.

Once when I was silently paddling close to the shore of St. Leonard's Creek, I came to an immense dead branch extending out over the water, with sixteen buzzards perched on it in silent convocation—they have no voices. As I came abreast, the branch with a loud crack broke off under the weight of the astonished birds, yet so quick was their wing-work not one got wet. Buzzards loathe the water. I have seen a group of them hopping up and down on the edge of the beach in an agony of frustrated appetite, not daring to attack a dead calf floating half-submerged only a foot from them. But in the air they are at home as no other of our birds are,

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except eagles. It is a joy to watch them zooming, planing, or poised in a gale. They fly high in order to survey a wide stretch of country for their unsavory meat. Buzzards are very secretive in their nesting, and in all these years I have never found but one. This was inside a hollow log prone on the ground, and was well advertised by its smell. The chicks are snowy white, and there are only two to a hatching.

For several years a pair of eagles nested in a dead tree on Point Patience. Though they were fisheaters, they didn't like to get their feathers wet. What they did was to watch the ospreys or fish-hawks. When the hawk secured a fish one of the eagles would hover above him and let out an ungodly scream. Whereupon the terrified osprey dropped his fish and beat it for home, and the eagle with a breathless swoop caught the fish before it struck the water. When the old house on Point Patience was turned into a summer hotel the eagles moved away.

The inlets along the more boisterous shores of the bay are of a different character, being deep motionless pools lying inside the beach. They are in turn filled and emptied by a shallow stream of water running through the sand at certain stages of the tide only. Though I had left childhood far behind, it was fascinating (and still is) to study the effects of erosion and silting in those miniature rivers. Like a God, with a few handfuls of sand one could dredge or dam the watercourse, or change its direction. The canoeist learned lessons that were of great practical value later on in descending the rapids of uncharted rivers. Once, to my astonishment, I found a procession of bulky shad determinedly flopping their way through a couple of inches of water to spawn in the

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warm pool inside. A flip of the paddle landed a noble supper on the sand.

On land I slowly became acquainted with the islanders. They looked on me as a mad foreigner, but were on the whole friendly. At this time there was no state road through the county; the steamboat thrice-weekly, the mail brought by buggy once a day, the telephone, and the *Sunpaper* were our links with the world. The nearest railway was thirty-five miles away, and that didn't go any place in particular. There was something that felt *right* to me in this. Biologically man is not a hustler; spells of intense activity, yes, followed by a bask in the sun; but the continuous drive of modern life does violence to his nature.

Like all indigenous cultures, that of Solomon's Island was full of inconsistencies. Alongside Webster's store a little tidal creek made in and out. Horses and rigs splashed through it, but a bridge had been built for pedestrians. It was not quite long enough; the spring tides rose above the approaches, and at such times everybody naturally sat down on the shore, took off his or her shoes and stockings, waded through and put them on again at the other side. Yet when a girl friend of mine was buying sneakers at Webster's and wished to try them on, the blushing clerk, thrusting them on her, said: "Take them home! Take them home!" When she insisted on trying them on, he led her into the dark loft over the store and fled.

When the same young lady and I entered Billy Files' ice cream saloon in our bathing suits, the innocent proprietor was horrified. He served us and hung around watching every mouthful, getting a tremendous kick out of it. It was customary for the islanders to bathe, the

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women anyhow, which is unusual in waterside villages, but no bathing suits! The thing was to dress precisely as you did at other times. A bevy would come down the street in last year's dresses complete with shoes, stockings, belts and sailor hats. They would walk out into the water and stand gossiping, bobbing decorously up and down, throwing water on their shoulders. After a while, they would come out and walk home with dignity, streaming.

Billy Files was a character. It was he who led the screaming school children down the road in pursuit of the first automobile. During my first summer the island was visited by a lady elocutionist who was a Poe enthusiast. In Baltimore at the time they were promoting a memorial to Poe, and she wished to aid it by giving a show. She procured some sheets of wrapping paper at Webster's and lettered announcements to hang on the wall of each store. She was not a very good calligrapher, and Billy Files, studying the broadside she had left with him, asked me as one who knew the world: "What I want to know is, what is this here Edgar Allan pie fund?"

The only other boarder at Miss Mollie's was a youth a year or two younger than myself called Evan. He was of a simple, winning, unselfish nature and we became fast friends. His father was having a small steam yacht built at the local shipyard, and Evan was helping with the finishing touches. In due course the father came, a queer, unstable old gentleman whose next move was always unpredictable. The *Gadabout* was one of his whims. He had insisted on installing a steam engine long after steam had gone out of use for propelling small craft; and Evan, poor wretch, was destined for engineer and

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fireman. Evan's patience with his father was angelic; the boy was like the parent and the old man his child.

The *Gadabout* was an engaging little vessel, but impracticable. There was a tiny galley in the forepart with a pipe berth for the sailors; aft of that a miniature state-room with a berth on each side. Boiler and engine inevitably took up the best accommodations amidships, leaving only room for a tiny saloon astern. It was evident at a glance that when she had steam up, the whole interior would be heated like an oven. In this the owner planned to cruise all summer under the southern sun.

I was invited to accompany them to Baltimore on their maiden voyage. The skipper was with child to cast off; there was no test, no trial run, and a hundred details were still unfinished when we steamed out of the harbor. Dan, a boy-of-all-work, and the skipper's Uncle Sam completed the ship's company. Uncle Sam was an ancient gaffer and a sport. My rating was cook. We had not proceeded half a dozen miles up the bay when the engine stopped and sullenly withstood all the sweating Evan's efforts to get it going again. He reported that the valves had slipped.

We lay drifting off the famous Cliffs of Calvert, out of sight of men. Nothing on the damned boat would work. The steam mounted higher and higher in the gauge, and we waited for the safety valve to pop. It didn't pop when it ought, and after a period of hideous anxiety, we drew the fire in a panic and dumped it overboard. Then we were without power. Promptly a storm blew up from the southeast, just right to carry us ashore. We dropped anchor, but nobody on board knew if our untried anchor was sufficient to hold us. The gale increased and we crouched on the tossing deck straining our sight to fix a

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mark on shore that would tell us if we were dragging. In the end it became only too clear that we *were* dragging—and fast. The skipper looked around at his new toy and paled. She hadn't been insured yet.

There was a tiny lifeboat aboard, but not having been rigged to the davits, it lay upside down on the cabin roof. It was an unsinkable steel lifeboat weighing God knows how many pounds; I think they said half a ton, but I won't swear to it. Be that as it may, the entire ship's company could not lift it. We had finally to put levers under it and work it overboard, while Uncle Sam hung on to the painter. Since I was the most, indeed the only experienced boatman aboard, I volunteered to row the skipper ashore. We embarked him with no little difficulty, because even under the best of conditions he was wobbly on his pins. As we cast loose, the excited boy, Dan, with some notion of provisioning us, tossed a big paper bag of gingersnaps in the lifeboat. The first wave which slopped in hit the gingersnaps and plastered them from gunwale to gunwale. A couple of years later upon boarding the *Gadabout*, I found bits of gingersnap clinging to the lifeboat, and it brought it all back.

The Cliffs of Calvert are lofty sliced planes of gravel fronting the Bay. At Cove Point just ahead of us there was a break, where a wide shallow bay made in, and this was my objective. It was an exhilarating row. No great effort, of course, because I was going with the wind; indeed, I was going too fast for my own comfort. I was wondering how I was going to stop. I had to watch sharp to keep from broaching to and capsizing. As we drew in, the roar of the surf on the beach was appalling. I knew what happened to small boats in a surf, and this one weighed half a ton or better. I said to the skipper:

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"Hang your legs over the side so you can drop over the instant she touches. And for God's sake get away from the boat or she'll break your legs! Let the waves roll her up the sand; it won't hurt her."

As it happened, some fishermen saw our predicament and came running to help. They knew what to do. Wading into the water they waited for us. When I brought her racing in on top of a wave, they seized the gunwales and ran us up out of harm's way.

In 1672 George Fox, the itinerant Quaker, had a similar experience nearby—perhaps in the same spot. He wrote in his Journal: "We went to the Cliffs where another general meeting was appointed. We went some of the way by land, the rest by water; and a storm arising, our boat was run aground, in danger to be beaten to pieces, and the water came in upon us. I was in a great sweat, having come very hot out of a meeting before, and now was wet with the water besides; yet having faith in the divine power, I was preserved from taking hurt, blessed be the Lord! To this meeting came many who received the truth with reverence. Most of the backsliders came in again."

Safely landed, the skipper and I walked along the beach to the Cove Point lighthouse, which had telephone connection. By an extraordinary piece of good luck, a tug had come into Solomon's Island to escape the storm, and was even then lying at the wharf with steam up. Word was sent to her of the *Gadabout's* situation, and the skipper and I sat on the lightkeeper's porch to wait and watch. We had no way of conveying word to our friends that help was on the way. The lightkeeper had a big telescope mounted on a tripod, and we took turns in watching the little yacht. She was much nearer

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the shore now. Her crazy tossing made the crew very seasick, and gallant Uncle Sam could be seen trying to uphold the morale of the two boys. Finally, the tug hove in sight around Little Cove Point and the skipper breathed freely again. He hired a buggy to take us back to the island.

This adventure drew us so close together that when the *Gadabout* was repaired, I not only shipped to Baltimore in her, but (since the crew approved of my cooking) continued on a longer cruise down to Norfolk, up the Elizabeth River, through the Great Dismal Swamp, and down the Pasquotank to Albemarle Sound. The skipper had an agency for steamboilers and engines for small vessels, but he didn't sell any. At Elizabeth City he incontinently left us and we lay at anchor week after week waiting for him to come back. However, we made the acquaintance of some girls in the town and the time was not too heavy on our hands. In the end, my money gave out and I had to get back to work.

Soon after I returned to Solomon's Island, a tournament was held on the common below Miss Mollie's house. This is an institution so ancient in tidewater Maryland that its origins have been lost. A level course of about a furlong is chosen in a field, and in the middle of it three gallows-like structures are erected in line about fifty feet apart. From the arm of each gallows depends a movable rod with a metal ring loosely clipped in the end. The rings are of the same sort as those snatched at by the riders on a merry-go-round. The long slender lances carried by the riders are of ancient and romantic form, and the position assumed for the charge is that of the knights of old. It is fine to watch, for the boys ride as if born to the saddle, and nearly everyone

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still has a good horse. There are comic aspects, too, for there is always at least one honest plow horse that lollops through with an expenditure of energy out of all proportion to his speed.

The lad who takes the most rings has the honor of crowning the Queen of Love and Beauty at the end of the riding; and the six runners-up crown the Maids of Honor. The crowns are pretty fillets of wax flowers that are becoming to every woman's head. There is a deal of oratory spilled at the presentation of the crowns and again at the coronation. Aspiring politicians are always available for these assignments. After the riding, an al fresco supper is served by the ladies of the church, and the day ends with a ball. In the old days the young knights used to dance until it was time to change their clothes and start plowing, but the present generation seems less hardy.

I must have attended nearly a hundred tournaments since, but this first one had the charm of the unexpected. All the county folk drove down in their antique carriages, some of quaint designs that I have never seen pictured. They are all gone now; they ought to have been preserved in a museum. The carriages were lined up on each side of the course; the horses taken out and tied behind, with armfuls of hay to keep them happy. There was a little judge's stand midway of the track with the judges sitting in front and a five-piece brass band behind, which played triumphant snatches every time a knight took three rings in a row and was led back to the stand escorted by the Marshal and the Herald.

The Marshal on this occasion was old John Horsley, resplendent with the wife's purple willow plume stuck in the band of his battered hat, and the parlor lambre-

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quin hung over one shoulder. The lambrequin was green in color and decorated with countless little balls of chenille. The knights were in costume also, mostly gay sashes and scarves, with varicolored strips of bunting wound round their legs. It is customary for each rider to choose a pseudonym; thus: Knight of Tulip Hill; Knight of Ivy Neck; Knight of Cremona and so on. Some odd paradoxes have crept into the ancient ritual, as when the Herald summons a knight to ride he bawls out: "Knight of Governor's Run *on deck!*" A moment later the cry is: "Knight of Governor's Run, prepare to charge!" And finally: "Charge, Sir Knight!" Whereupon he comes pounding down the track.

When there is a tie to be ridden off, smaller rings are hung up, and if the tie persists, rings smaller still. The final rings would not go on your little finger, but I have seen these cool lads spear them one after another with never a miss. Occasionally, it will take an hour to ride off a tie; meanwhile the excitement of the spectators rises to fever heat.

The handsomest young man on the field that day was Rudolph Coventon. Rudolph is still my neighbor, but not so handsome now. Sitting his horse with a half-smile, he made a picture of grace and good breeding that has lingered in my mind for thirty years. Not so well-bred was little Crispin D., who got drunk and came staggering into our yard looking for a drink of water. He was unmannerly to the Doctor, who snatched up a croquet mallet in his rage, and in the words of the old writers, broke Crispin's head. I separated the combatants and in so doing got my new gray suit liberally besprinkled with Crispin's blood. Crispin, middle-aged now, still turns up drunk at every tournament. He is

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fond of dancing solus at the ball with great impressment, and has to be firmly led out.

The suppers are grand. The staples are always country-cured ham, fried chicken, deviled crabs, cole slaw, potato salad and sliced tomatoes. Marvelous homemade pickles, chili sauces and catsups decorate the table. You choose a waitress, if possible, who has a tender spot for you; she will have delicacies in reserve. As for the balls, they are like balls anywhere. The band of the afternoon transforms itself into an orchestra, and there is always a boring coronation address, featuring ancient chivalry, our fair women and brave men, etc. Following that, the successful knights and their ladies dance the royal set, and then the party is on in earnest. Our county raises lovely girls.

In 1915 a shocking innovation was introduced at Prince Frederick in the shape of an automobile tournament. I am ashamed to say that I took part in it. I drove the car down the track while a lady partner stood up in it and speared the rings. She won a pair of silk stockings. I think everybody regretted this profanation, for there has never been a suggestion that it be repeated.

It would be sad to see the tournaments die out. A few years ago there was a danger of it in our parts because they had a young parson at Prince Frederick who frowned on betting. He was consistent; he said there should be no tournament given for his churches (he served two) unless the betting was cut out. As he attended the tournaments, and was on other scores greatly respected, there was no betting and the two tournaments that summer fell flat. The knights jousted in other fields. In the following summer the parson, having, as he thought, accomplished his purpose, did not come to the

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tournaments; betting was slyly resumed and everybody's interest revived. Now the parson has been removed to another sphere of activity, and once more the excitement focuses in the knot of men who mill around the horses, riders and negro grooms at the head of the track, offering and taking wagers. There are no professional bookmakers. So they will survive for a while yet, though the young men are finding it hard to keep a good horse as well as an automobile. There is no falling off in their horsemanship. Local honors last summer were carried off by a boy with a wooden leg!

Chapter III

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IT WAS DURING THE SUMMER OF 1910, MY THIRD AT MISS Mollie's, that Ab turned up. Ab was twenty years old, tall and lithe as an Indian, and with something of the Indian in his glittering dark eyes. At this time I had in mind a journey to the far northwest to visit a waterfall which had been seen only once by white men, and I was looking for a young companion. Earlier journeys had convinced me that native guides in such a case are worse than useless; they come between you and the country; they spoil the fun. I wanted a partner, and he had to be younger than myself and so content to let me run the show.

The strong and lively Ab looked ideal, but there is a great responsibility in choosing a partner for five months in the wilderness—murder has been done in the North for no reason except that a man could no longer bear the sight of his companion; so I took him for a preliminary trip that winter through the rivers and lakes of central Florida. That was a little wilderness in those days. He proved to be the ideal partner; hard-working, spirited, cheerful in the rain; and in the following May we set off on our great expedition, and were gone all summer. The story has been told in another place; suffice it to say here that we bagged our waterfall and brought home the first photographs ever taken of it.

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The experiences of that summer drew us very close, and we planned further ventures together. Ab graduated from a college of agriculture the following year and spent the summer getting some practical experience on a farm. In the fall (1912) he joined me at Solomon's Island and we set off up the Patuxent by canoe to look for land. This is where Charles' Gift comes into the story.

We carried a camping outfit and slept out for several nights. Not long ago, in reading the seventeenth-century letters of the Jesuits from Maryland, I came upon the account of an excursion up the "Patuxen," which brought our trip back so vividly that my heart warmed to the memory of the young priest who wrote it. His story was of 1642.

The following is our manner of making an excursion. We are carried in a pinnace or galley, to wit: the Father, the interpreter and a servant . . . Two of them propel the boat with oars, when the wind is adverse or fails; the third steers with the helm. We take with us a little chest of bread, butter, cheese, corn, cut and dried before it is ripe, beans and a little flour—another chest, also, for carrying bottles, one of which contains wine for religious purposes, six others holy water for the purpose of baptism; a box with the sacred vessels, and a slab as an altar for the sacred function; and another casket full of trifles, which we give the Indians to conciliate their affection—such as little bells, combs, knives, fish-hooks, needles, thread and other things of this kind. We have, besides, a little tent, when we are obliged to lie out in the open air, which is frequently the case; also a larger one, which is adapted to keep out the rain. . . .

In our excursions we endeavor as much as we can, to

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reach by evening some English house or Indian village, but if not, we land, and to the Father falls the care of mooring the boat fast to the shore, then of collecting wood and making a fire, while in the meantime the two others go to hunt—that if they take anything it may be prepared. But if not, having refreshed ourselves with our provisions, we lie down by the fire and sleep. If fear of rain threatens, we erect our hut and cover it with a larger mat spread over; and praise be to God, we enjoy this humble fare and hard couch with a not less joyful mind than more luxurious provisions in Europe.

At first Ab and I dallied with the notion of purchasing Point Patience, which was then in the market. It had an eighteenth-century brick mansion unhappily defaced by “restorations,” but the site on which it stands is incomparably the finest on the lower river. The Point proper is a curious, hooked spit of sand running out until it almost bisects the river. It was called Point Patience naturally, because it would often take a sailing vessel the better part of a day to weather it. An extraordinary spot. On the lower side of the spit the tide has scooped out a pool twenty fathoms deep. The sand goes down like a wall; a battleship could lie alongside without grounding, and put a plank ashore.

The old house stands on a bank with half-obliterated terraces of grass in front, and the beach at the bottom. Behind it there used to be a double row of big morello cherry trees that were famous. They are gone now, but many of the ancient cedars are standing, broken and magnificent. Further back, the farm stretched out in a narrow strip for more than a mile along the edge of a high bank looking northwest up river. What a waterfront! It is amusing to speculate what might have hap-

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pened had Ab and I bought it. Perhaps I would be keeping the summer hotel now. However, there were more than two hundred acres of land; we decided it was too big for us to swing, and we paddled on up the river.

I don't remember who first told us about Charles' Gift, or if we just stumbled on it. It was then known in the neighborhood as the Old Dixon place, or simply, the Old House. We noticed at once that the shore had a unique point of rock—there is no other rock anywhere about, which had the effect of forming a shallow curving bay beyond. That rock still keeps the bank from washing. Charles' Gift has a green and wooded bank with a broad white beach at its foot, whereas all the other banks are naked clay cut by the tide. From the first the beach was a main attraction.

The house, which stands two or three hundred yards from the bank, was not visible from the water. Upon climbing the bank we were hardly impressed by our first view of it. True, with its steep roof, big chimneys and quaint dormers, it had a pleasing antiquity, but it was incredibly run down and also swarming with slatternly poor whites of all ages, two families of them. In the garden patch there were rank weeds man-high. Inside the house it was worse. We could get no conception of the noble rooms all cut up and cluttered as they were with flimsy modern partitions. The domestic arrangements of the poor whites will not bear description. What I remember chiefly is the flies. I had never seen so many, nor felt such sticky ones. Northerners like me were revolted by the lighthearted shif'lessness of Maryland poor folk. With them, as Miss Mollie used to say, it was: "Come day, go day, God send Sunday." But I can say that in thirty years, except in the fastnesses of our woods,

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the squalor has pretty well disappeared. White families clean up their yards nowadays, and grow flowers, if it's only a few dusty zinnias. So much for the homemakers' clubs.

At that time the house was a secondary consideration with us; we were looking for land. The young farmer's eyes brightened when he saw the black earth and the shocked corn in the fields with ten foot stalks. The very weeds were impressive. He went down on one knee in the garden patch and crumbled a handful of earth with a fervor almost religious. "Man! it is some soil that will grow weeds like that!" We walked over the farm and fell in love with it. It had everything the heart of a young farmer could desire, with loveliness thrown in for good measure. It was a peninsula in shape roughly like a lady's carriage boot, with the sole washed by the river. A little nameless inlet rounded the back of the heel, and at the other end a long, curving arm of Mears' Creek shaped the toe, the instep, the upper. The house stood midway in what would be the hollow place under the instep.

The toe was about half a mile from the house. From the high point there we looked down on the narrow mouth of Mears' and over green sedgy flats inside, with shining channels winding through. Within the flats spread a sheet of deep water which divided into three arms curving inland out of sight. Bluff points separated the arms. The nearest had a red-roofed house on it; the next was densely covered with tall pines; the third was an odd hump of earth shaped like a whale, extending between creek and river. The hump was covered by ragged trees borne down by the exigent creepers, and it is called "the Island" though it is connected with the

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mainland by an isthmus of sand. Looking over the intricate small waste of land and water, my young partner murmured: "Gosh! think of the ducks that will come here to feed in cold weather!" Whenever I see the mouth of Mears' Creek, I think of Vincent van Gogh. It is a scene for his brush above all others.

In our progress over the place we were continually being held up by such pictures. The road down to Mears' Point passed through the middle of the farm for a quarter of a mile, and then veered off to the river bank. Between bank and beach at this point lies a little bog which looked mosquitoey (and is) but had infinite charm. Many things grow around and in it that we don't find elsewhere: a clump of pawpaw trees; bayberry bushes; "a bank where the wild thyme blows"; and quantities of bog myrtle which flaunts its woolly white blossoms in November after all the other wild plants have shut up shop. From the bank here, looking back toward the point of rock, the whole of our little bay is revealed. There is something in the subtle curve of the white beach which ravishes the eye.

Our shore line along the arm of Mears' which reached back around the farm, formed a succession of green knolls with gullies between. Each knoll is the predestined building site of a bungalow, but I hope I won't live to see it. In the first gully rose a clump of Maryland virgin pines, a noble tree, which will soon be extinct. Its wood, Mr. Ed says, is lovely to work with, having the rich color of yellow pine and the softness of white. The great room at Charles' Gift is paneled with this wood, and in the cellar I have a precious pile of twenty-two inch planks for repairs and replacements. Another gully was

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full of wineberry cones, a cousin of the red raspberry, and refreshing for summer breakfasts.

At the extreme other end of the farm we found a natural esplanade above the point of rocks, and here I instantly decided to build my home, leaving the old house to the farmer. It should look straight south down a long reach of the river to Point Patience three miles away, and the summer wind have free entry in the front windows. The dining porch should project over the bank at the left, immediately above the nameless cove with its green trees mirrored in the water. Our boundary on that side was marked by a group of old eccentric cedars which would ever be grateful to the eye while one ate one's meals. On the other side of this little cove is a notable spot called Sandy Landing, where from time immemorial the bugeyes and pungys have run their noses up on the beach to unload.

We were so incontinently bent on buying, that I suspected at the time we were paying too much for the place, and now I know it. The owner was John Hack, storekeeper and postmaster not far away, and the people on the place were his tenants. Hack, as we were to learn later, had bought in the farm at a tax sale twelve years before.

He told Mr. Ed that he expected to turn a big profit by selling it to the "Colonny Dams." He now made over three hundred per cent. That is the kind of man he was. Yet along with his sharpness went a kind of innocence (the two qualities are often found together) that endeared him to us.

During the business of the transfer we had plenty of opportunities to draw him out. A tall man with a great belly, pronounced dewlaps and an incongruous infan-

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tile lisp, he was very profane of speech, but always took care to tip his cap politely to the Deity when he blasphemed. There was a subtle social distinction in the fact that he was never called Mr. John or Mr. Johnnie, but always John Hack. He had a fine house and was credited with being the richest man in the neighborhood, but he was not quality.

He told us tall tales of the old house; of the ghost that walked up and down the back porch at midnight mourning and clanking his chains; of the pot of gold said to be buried in the cellar, and so on. Once we had his signature to the agreement, my naughty partner changed some bills for a couple of gold pieces at the Solomon's bank, and carelessly displayed them in John Hack's store. Upon being questioned as to where he got them, he betrayed confusion, finally admitted finding them in the cellar of the old house. John Hack's broad face was a study. He went around with the expression of a little girl who has broken her dolly, until he learned that he had been hoaxed.

He had never been out of Calvert County until he was past forty. On that occasion he took his family for a visit to the Jamestown Exposition in Virginia, where they saw trolley cars, electric lights and automobiles for the first time. He told us of his struggles to board a crowded trolley car at the Exposition gates. Again and again he tried to get on, only to be thrust aside. Finally he lost his temper and bored in blindly. "On the step of the car," he said, "Gemmen! I trod on the tail of a woman's skirt, but I didn't stop; no sir! I kep' on a walking up it, and be Jesus! (tipping his cap) it come right off her and dropped to her feet!"

When the transfer was completed, one of the families in the old house vacated, and we kept the other to work

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on the place. Ab moved into the "best room" downstairs, a sorry, fly-specked chamber with the sun glaring through the unprotected windows all afternoon. One wall of the room was handsomely paneled, two were of cheap, rough plaster, while the fourth was almost entirely taken up by a noble fireplace, which had been clumsily bricked up, leaving only a stovepipe hole. He was dependent for his food on the crew that made day and night hideous in the other rooms of the house, and with many misgivings I left him to return to New York.

In the spring I returned, bringing a camping outfit. I set up my tent under a pair of old cherry trees on the edge of the bank near the rocks. Here I had the space of a field between me and the too-populous house. I cut a flight of earthen steps in the bank and my canoe lay on the sand at the bottom. There was a floor to my tent; it had a veranda and the necessary furniture; a mosquito bar; I could have lived there in great content but for the responsibilities of the farm. Ab's brother, who was a travel agent in Baltimore, had stipulated when he put up his part of the money, that Ab must take charge of his office for three months in the spring of 1913 while he conducted a tour abroad, and I was left to run the place.

For hands, I had old man Smiley, who was in his sixties, and Willy Johnson, his brother-in-law, aged fifteen. Smiley was an amiable old soul, completely fatuous; ingenious only in discovering new ways to do a thing wrong; always astonished by the outcome of his own mistakes. He would weep when I chided him. The poor wretch had had no luck. He was run out of St. Mary's County across the river for starting a brush fire on a windy day which burned over half a dozen farms; he

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was married to Agnes Johnson, sixteen years old, who brought with her a mother and three brothers, of whom the oldest was my precious Willy. This Willy, a round-limbed, apple-cheeked cherub with china blue eyes, was old in wickedness. He could look you straight in the eye and lie like a trooper. I had a weakness for the boy, but I had to hide it under a stern port.

I didn't have much to do with their household because I lived in the tent, but I had eyes and ears and Ab had told me things. The mother-in-law, whom I looked upon as an old woman, liked to dress up in men's clothes and prance about the yard, ogling me when I passed. Every night the lot of them quarreled hideously. The language that flew about and the charges hurled back and forth were eye-openers to me, and I thought I knew life. All the Johnsons combined to make old Smiley's life a hell. When they succeeded in reducing him to tears, they laughed like hyenas.

To the city man the business of farming was a nightmare. There were so many things that had to be done immediately, it was almost impossible to decide where to start. And each day more and more things presented themselves, so that we were always falling further behind. In that out-of-the-way place we had ourselves to mend everything that broke; everything unexpectedly called for, had to be improvised on the spot. As the head of the concern, I was called on daily to serve as doctor for man and beast; as machinist, carpenter, cement worker and toxicologist. We started to dig a well down at Mears' Point. Having no brick, I thought myself very ingenious in contriving a curb of planks firmly bound together with the tough vines of the wild grape. The grape vine presently turned the water black and brick

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had to be ordered after all. The friendly neighbors would have been glad to furnish advice and assistance, but I was young enough and vain enough to wish to blunder through on my own.

The season's work was behind even when I came, because my partner had become involved in a friendly dispute with Mr. Joey Ludwell as to the proper method of keeping ice. It was the custom of the neighborhood to dig a hole in the ground and build a shed over it, but Ab had been taught at college that ice should be stored above ground. He had wagered Mr. Joey that he would serve him mint juleps in August with ice kept above ground, and he had taken precious time from the winter plowing and fencing to build an atrocious tower of raw lumber beside our entrance gate for an icehouse. It was finished too late for ice that winter, and the following winter I was out of the firm. I never did hear who won the wager.

During his term in town Ab came down for the week ends when he could, but less and less often as the weeks went by. On these occasions I hitched up and drove over to Cove Point wharf to fetch him from the steamboat. Those drives through the scented night when honeysuckle and the wild grape were in flower are something to remember. The sounds of night in the country; a mockingbird's song; the mournful iteration of the whip-poorwill; the bark of a disembodied dog. Nowadays night driving is spoiled by the searchlights of our motor-cars, and who walks at night in the country any more? Not the younger generation in my house. It is only seamen who keep in communication with the stars.

After Ab had returned to the farm I made a trip to town for some reason or other, and when I landed back

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at Cove Point in the middle of the night there was no one to meet me. At that time there was no house near the wharf, and nothing for me to do but walk home, eight miles, burdened with two heavy suitcases. I cannot say that it was a hardship, because I was accustomed to walking long distances, but I didn't enjoy communion with the stars that night; I got madder with every mile.

When I finally stumbled into the tent, I trod on somebody's head. It was Ab's kid brother sleeping on the floor. They woke up then, and explanations were forthcoming. In plenty of time they had hitched Nellie, our aged mare, to the light wagon and had made a start for Cove Point. One seldom met anybody on the road at night and Nellie was very reliable; they found it more comfortable to sit on the floor of the wagon and smoke, leaving Nellie to drive herself. They fell asleep. When they awoke, the wagon was stopped and they discovered that Nellie, erring from the road, had attempted to pass on the wrong side of a telephone pole. The wagon had hung up between pole and fence, whereupon Nellie had philosophically gone to sleep also. They backed her into the road again, but they had no idea where they were in the dark. It seemed best just to start her going, and resume their sleep, trusting that she would walk home with them. Which she did. They had arrived a little before me, and had come to the tent to wait for me and receive the discharge of my wrath. Their apprehensions, however, were not keen enough to keep them awake. Those boys could sleep any place, any time.

Ab's sojourn in town proved fatal to the partnership. He was a handsome lad and socially gifted; his brother's fashionable friends took him up, and he imbibed a new

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set of ideas. On one of his visits to the farm he said gloomily: "How could I ever ask a nice girl to share a dump like this?" That was the beginning of the end; he had lost his enthusiasm for farming; he began to feel trapped. Passing over the months that followed, painful for both of us, it is enough to say that when fall came around Ab and his brother bought out my share, and I left Charles' Gift, as I thought, forever.

Chapter IV

THE SPRING OF 1914 FOUND ME BACK IN MY ROOM UNDER the mansard roof at Miss Mollie's. It would not be true to say that I regretted what had happened; the relief of getting that Old Man of the Sea, i.e., the farm, off my back, was too great. After all, I was a storyteller and the quiet hours at a desk every day followed by a long paddle and a swim off Deep Point suited my nature much better. If I finished my stint early enough, I could even paddle out to one of the lonely beaches fronting the bay, or explore some more of the green intricacies of Harper's Creek; I have not yet viewed the whole of it. Or in my canoe I could visit my pleasant acquaintances, the Buhannons, Garlands, Rylands or Tazewells over on the St. Mary's side; and most often my dearest of friends, Robert and Gertrude de Barril at Drum Point.

At Solomon's Island, the doctor, in addition to his practice, maintained for the Public Health Service a little hospital for sailors. In the summertime he almost never had a patient there, and I was permitted to work in his office. On the back street of the village, where no one passed, and with an outlook over the field pleasant enough but not too distractingly lovely, it made an ideal workshop. There, surrounded by piles of the American Medical Journal and the doctor's pharmacy on sagging

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shelves—some of the bottles so old that the drugs were actually coming through the glass!—I spent many peaceful hours battering the keys. When my matter failed, I could stretch out on a cot in the ward while I smoked and composed a new scene.

The only interruptions came when the doctor appeared with a groaning negro holding his jaw. The patient's friends usually followed with anticipatory grins. At such times I used to snatch up my pipe and fly to the beach, but it was impossible to get far enough away to deafen my ears to the bloodcurdling shrieks from the hospital. Meanwhile the other negroes would be holding their sides, clapping each other on the back, rolling on the ground in laughter. When I got back the patient would be laughing, too, while he proudly exhibited the extracted molar and spat blood in the grass.

Tooth-pulling brings to mind one of Mr. Ed's stories. When Mr. Ed was a boy some sixty years ago he was great friends with a Doctor Basil Dixon who lived over on the main road where Jim Wilson's store now stands. Doctor Dixon was a kind man, Mr. Ed says, and the boys used to ride over there occasionally to talk to him. The doctor kept two huge and ferocious dogs of unknown breed that would obey none but himself; and the boy would never venture inside the yard unless the doctor was in sight. The dogs' names were Lamb and Beaver!

One day boy and man were sitting on the porch when an old negro named Major Tawney came up the road holding his jaw. He stopped outside the fence and mutely pointed to his swollen face, whereupon the doctor went in and, rummaging in his tool chest, fished out a pair of forceps from among the chisels and screw-drivers and bits. "He kep' it greased so it wouldn't rust,"

Mr. Ed says, "and naturally right smart dirt get mixed with the grease." The doctor returned to the fence. He was on the inside, the patient outside. He obtained a firm grip on the offending tooth and, bracing his foot against a fence post, looked over his shoulder and bellowed: "Hey, Lamb! Hey, Beaver!" The two dogs came charging around the house with dripping jaws; Major Tawney jerked back in terror, and the doctor held the forceps aloft with the tooth in it.

After having written the above, I went up to Mr. Ed's to verify the story, and to obtain, if possible, some further particulars. "What sort of man was Doctor Basil Dixon?" I asked. "A fine, upstanding man," said Mr. Ed; "aristocratic. When I knew him his hair was white and he had a gray beard which he wore trimmed instead of flowing. A fine man! worked hard all his life long and took nothing for it. When he died he left nine hundred dollars and he directed that after a hundred dollars was taken out for his grave and his tombstone, the rest was to be divided among some poor families he named, who never had nothing. He is buried in St. Paul's Chapel, Southern Methodist, where the road makes down to Cove Point. He built that church himself."

Some particulars of the quarrel between the Northern and the Southern Methodists after the Civil War followed, which I will omit; then Miss Jinny, Mr. Ed's wife, spoke up. "For a while there was a great joke about Doctor Basil Dixon. After his wife died, he thought he was in love with a young girl, a Miss Palmer, who was the governess down at Ed's mother's house, and he dyed all the front part of his hair black. He couldn't see the back part in the mirror and he just let that be. How the children laughed!"

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Mr. Ed took up the tale again. "Did I tell you about the time Doctor Gid Ireland send for Basil Dixon?" "No," I said. "Well, Gid Ireland, he had right smart trouble getting through medical school. Some said he paid money for his sheepskin, but that wasn't true. The fact is, he couldn't pass the surgery part, and the head of that medical school gave him his sheepskin on the understanding that he would never undertake a dangerous operation without assistance. And Gid promised he wouldn't. Well, one day Frank Ward—he was the grandfather of these Wards down on the creek yonder—he swallowed a chicken bone—what's that bone the children pull, like? Wishbone, sure! Frank Ward swallowed the wishbone of a chicken, and 'twould neither come up nor go down. So they sent for Doctor Gid Ireland. Well, Gid, he try every God's thing he knew, but couldn't budge that bone. Meanwhile, Ward was like to choke to death. Gid was in a way, seeing he didn't dast cut because of his promise. So he send in haste for Basil Dixon.

"Doctor Dixon always had the best riding horses in the county. He was known for it. At this time he had a horse called Veto who was a natural racker, and Veto carried him to Ward's house in no time at all. Meantime, while waiting for Doctor Dixon, Gid Ireland made Ward take off every stitch his clothes, and hang himself over a chair. He then called for a turkey feather and he tickled Ward behind. Ward squirm and laugh and cough so hard the bone flew right out his mouth. That was the sight that met Doctor Dixon's eyes when he come in. He told me the story."

At Solomon's Island I remembered how often the

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county folk had asked me to their houses during my stay at Charles' Gift, and wishing to return their hospitality, I decided to give a dance in the parish hall. Miss Mollie's daughter, who had suddenly grown up in the interim, was much better acquainted in the county than I, and she helped me with the invitations. Thus she shared in the opprobrium of what followed. No doubt it had its share in paving the way for our marriage two years later.

I did not know that there was a feud of fifty years standing between island and county, because it had smoldered during my summers in Maryland. Some years before, a county man had been killed on the island, and no county man nor islander had forgotten that. I did know that no invitation dance had ever been held on the island—until now all comers paid a dime at the door and went in—but it did not occur to me that the islanders would resent the innovation. There was a certain clamorous dame of the village whom I may call Annie Figby. She had two pretty daughters, and presumably felt insulted because they were not invited. She also had two young and hot-blooded sons. It came out afterwards that the Figbys were the main eggshons in the affair. In the days preceding the dance I used to see the blowsy Mrs. Figby and the parson's little wife nodding and whispering over the parsonage gate, but how was I to guess that I was the subject of their animadversions?

Nobody warned me in so many words, but by the time the day came, I had gathered out of the air that there was trouble brewing, and I went to the parson (from whom I had hired the hall) to ask his advice. There was still time to call it off by telephone, I said, if he thought it wise to do so. He pooh-poohed my fears;

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just village talk, he said; there would be no real trouble; and gave me to understand that he would stand by me. Yet only a few hours after our talk, he loaded his family in a democrat and drove off the island, giving out that he would be gone all night. There was no constable or other law officer on the island; the parson was the only representative of authority we had. It was then too late to do anything.

The date was May 14th, 1914, and it was a heavenly moonlight night. The party started with the look of a highly successful affair; all the county people came; some in buggies or on horseback; others in motorboats down the river. The battleship *Indiana* of that era was lying in the harbor with a skeleton crew; she was on her way to Annapolis to pick up the middies for their summer cruise. An invitation was sent out to her, and eight or ten of the younger officers attended. It was the presence of the blue uniforms and brass buttons that erected my poor party to the proportions of a *cause célèbre*. A party of Ab's fashionable friends drove all the way from Baltimore in an automobile—a chancy journey in those days. When they arrived, the trouble had already started, and they remained quietly sitting in their car in the moonlight and watching. They got their money's worth of thrill.

As I said, it started well. In those days our tastes were simple; we were content to dance to the music of a phonograph; at other times the girls spelled at the piano. The first intimation of trouble came in the shape of hoots and catcalls from outside. The hall was on the second floor. There was no street lighting, of course, and looking down from the windows, what with the shadows of trees and the building itself, we could see nothing of

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our ill-wishers. But it was evident from the sounds that there was a big crowd gathering. We didn't mind hoots and catcalls, and danced on.

The windows were open at the top to permit of the freest circulation of air. Presently little bags of pepper began to sail in over the tops of the sashes, bursting when they struck the floor, or hitting the dancers and scattering their contents. Everybody began to sneeze. The girls were very game (such a lot of pretty girls were present!); they danced on, smiling through the pepper-induced tears. The hall was lighted by acetylene gas, furnished from a little plant outside the building. The mob broke it up and the lights went out. We danced in the dark, laughing.

I had invited a number of people from the island to my dance and not one of them came. As it turned out, everybody of the better sort in the village had taken care to go to bed early that night, and to put out the lights. Everybody knew what was going to happen but me. The only one who stood by me was the parson's father, aged eighty-six. He fulminated with indignation at the outrage, as he called it. After the lights went out, he circulated around the neighborhood collecting stable lanterns. He passed through the mob, daring them to touch him, and they did not. He hung up the lanterns in the hall, and the dance went on.

It was interesting to observe how my guests reacted to the situation. The girls, as I said, were game and smiling. At such a time, girls always are, somehow; it is a different sort of thing that terrifies them. There was a little man, a great braggart, who literally turned green with fright and edged behind the skirts of his large and handsome wife like a timid colt with his mother. When-

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ever she moved, he moved—behind her. There was a youth who looked upon himself as a fire-eater, and brandishing a gun, announced with lurid particulars what he was going to do to the so-and-sos outside. Gun in hand, he strode to the head of the stairs. He looked over his shoulder to see if anybody was going to stop him. Nobody moved to do so, and he put his gun in his pocket and came sheepishly back.

Now the naval officers, feeling that as representatives of the country's armed forces it was up to them to act, went into consultation. The ranking lieutenant announced that they would go out and remonstrate with the mob. They marched down the stairs full of a grim determination to be good-humored about it; there was a brief dreadful silence and then they came up again rather quicker than they had gone down. At the door they were met with a barrage of what the newspapers called "malignant" eggs. For days past those eggs had been collected. The sacred uniforms! The sight was really too shocking to be borne, and the rest of us turned away our heads while the officers huddled in a corner mopping each other down.

In the end Frank Hampton, one of the older guests, proposed that we adjourn the party to his house, eight miles up county. On the whole it was considered the wisest thing to do. There was no demonstration when we sallied out of the hall; the mob retreated further into the shadows; we could see nothing of them, and not a voice was raised. We separated in search of our various buggies and motorboats. The officers went back to their ship.

An hour later the dance was resumed in Frank Hampton's big new house on the river, and kept up until

near morning. All the guests were so exhilarated by what had happened that it turned out to be one of the best dances ever given in the county.

As I had no way of getting back to the island, Ab offered me a cot in my late tent on the river bank, now his. As it was more than three miles around by road and only a mile in a direct line, we started at dawn straight through thorny gullies, across plowed fields, and along the beach, taking with us one of the smart young men from Baltimore. It was rough going for patent leather pumps and white flannel pants. When the visitor was required to take off his clothes altogether to ford the mouth of Mears', he cursed the day he had accepted an invitation to dance in Calvert.

On the following day there was hell to pay. I don't know who telephoned the story to the press, but it was taken up with avidity; the tale of the malignant eggs was reprinted from the Canal Zone to Nome. I know it because I had the misfortune to be subscribing to a press bureau at the time, and before I could stop them, I received hundreds of clippings that I had to pay for. The islanders found the white light of publicity embarrassing enough, but when the Navy Department issued an order forbidding all vessels of the service to land men on Solomon's Island, the village was hit in its tenderest place. All the rest of the summer with bitterest chagrin the storekeepers had to watch battleships, training ships, destroyers and submarines putting hundreds of free spenders ashore at Millstone over on the St. Mary's side.

Ugly threats of what was going to be done to me reached my ears. However, when my mother came down on the steamboat some nights later, I was waiting for

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her on the wharf at midnight. Several of the leading spirits of the mob were standing about, but I was not chucked overboard. Nobody even spoke to me. As a matter of fact, the egg and pepper party was the last flare-up of the long-standing island-county feud. It has never been heard of since.

Chapter V

THE GRAND HARBOR IN FRONT OF SOLOMON'S ISLAND WAS a busier place in the early days of the colony than it is now, just as Calvert County was more thickly settled then than now. The old records present many picturesque incidents that took place on the water that was plowed by my canoe every afternoon. The quaint little ships of the seventeenth century used to make rendezvous there with their cargoes of tobacco, while awaiting word from Point Comfort that the Virginia ships were ready to sail. They departed for England in company, generally fifty sail or more, and under the protection of a man-of-war, for fear of the French "privateeres."

Typical is the record of the ship *Constant Friendship*, as related by Raphael Semmes in *Captains and Mariners of Early Maryland*. She arrived at St. Mary's on December 20th, 1671. On the following day the master went ashore to enter his ship at the Custom House. After spending ten days anchored off St. Mary's (on the Potomac) landing passengers and goods, the *Constant Friendship* sailed for the Patuxent "to do some business there." After a week in the Patuxent they sailed for the Severn, which they reached shortly after midnight, sailing in boldly, "there being moonlight and fair weather."

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Two months and a half were spent in this river, delivering goods and taking aboard tobacco. As the vessel lay at anchor, the tobacco was brought off in shallops and sloops. It was rolled from the plantations to the landings in hogsheds, and this is the origin of the term "rolling road." After loading with over five hundred hogsheds of tobacco, the *Constant Friendship* sailed back to the Patuxent, where more tobacco was bought. It was not until the end of April that the vessel, having completed her loading, was ready to return to England. It was very convenient for the Maryland planter to have vessels from England come right to his shore.

In 1672 George Fox, the celebrated Quaker, dropped anchor in the Patuxent after a voyage of "six or seven weeks" from Jamaica. He says in his Journal:

After we had entered the bay of Patuxent River a great storm arose which cast a boat on us for shelter; in which were divers men and women of account in the world. We took them in, but the boat was lost with five hundred pounds of goods in it as they said. They continued on board us several days not having any means to get off; and we had a very good meeting with them in the ship. But provisions grew short, for they had brought none in with them; and ours by reason of the length of our voyage, were well nigh spent when they came to us; so with their living upon it too, we had now little or none left. Whereupon George Pattison took a boat and ventured his life to get ashore; the hazard was so great that all but friends (the Quakers) concluded he would be cast away. Yet it pleased the Lord to bring him safe to land; and in a short time after, the friends of the place came to fetch us to land also, in a seasonable time for our provisions were quite spent.

George Fox was a great and a good man, but I think

he must have had an undue terror of the water. It is difficult to picture a storm severe enough to have kept them for several days prisoners on their ship *in the bay* (by which I assume he means the river mouth) since it appears they had a small boat.

On the Calvert shore of the harbor diagonally opposite the steamboat wharf on the island stands Rousby Hall, a brick dwelling in the quaint style of the first plantation houses. The present building, however, dates from the early nineteenth century. Its predecessor was burned by the British on their way up our river in 1814 to take Washington. Rousby Hall is a sad, neglected little house, having outlived all its trees except one stunted specimen in front of the sweeping porch. In the grounds still stands the original "magazine," a tiny building whose bricks in three hundred years have moldered away into mere pedestals supported by the mortar. You can see through it from side to side. Indeed, it has probably fallen down altogether since I was there last. Behind it is the eighteenth-century tomb of a young scion of the house of Rousby who died in London and whose body was sent home across the ocean in a cask of rum.

The Rousbys were an important family in the old days. There was the bold Christopher, who was the King's Collector of Customs in Maryland under Charles II. He lived, not at Rousby Hall, but at Susquehanna on the other side of the harbor. His house still stands, one of the most winning and saddest survivals of the seventeenth century. It spreads along the bluff for a hundred feet and only one room deep, with a porch on each side coming low to the ground, peaked dormers and a big chimney. It has been so long in the hands of negroes or poor whites there is not a tree, nor a bush,

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nor even a spear of grass to grace it, but only the naked earth. It enjoys one of the finest prospects on the coast.

The Maryland Archives tell that when Christopher Rousby thought Governor Charles Calvert, the third Lord Baltimore, was hindering him in the collection of export taxes, he called "his Lordshipp Traytor to his face, and his Lordshipp Offering to speake again, Mr. Rousby told him he had best hold his tongue & say noe more. . . ." He further insulted Calvert by telling him he deserved to be sent back to England in chains. Lord Baltimore's wife, who was present "dureing the Discourse betweene his Lordshipp & Mr. Rousby fell a crying." Not softened by her Ladyship's tears, Rousby swore he "had spoke noe more than what he could produce from under the King's hand and Seale."

In view of Rousby's remarks, it is little wonder that Lord Baltimore presently petitioned the King to deprive Rousby of his office as Collector of Customs. They were hearty name-callers in those days. His Lordship referred to Rousby as a devil and a knave and said that he was "the most lewd, debauched, swearing and most prophane Fellow in the whole Government." He said further that the Collector's high-handed methods and insolent manner had caused many merchants to stop making trips to Maryland "to the Dimunition of his Majesty's Revenue." Calvert also claimed that Rousby was "as great a Traytor in his heart to his Sacred Majestie as is this day liveing." In proof of it the Maryland Proprietor mentioned an occasion when the Collector of Customs, speaking of the King's officials, had said that they were "great knaves and Turne Coates and begin to pisse backwards." This, Calvert maintained, set a bad example to the sea captains.

Rousby denied all these accusations. He said that

Charles Calvert must have made them on the theory that by "casting much Dirt some might stick to work his ends." Rousby in the end was vindicated. He not only retained his position as Collector, but his Majesty wrote Governor Calvert that because of his interference with Rousby and other customs officials, he should really be deprived of his charter rights, but that "out of Our great Clemency" he would only compel him to pay a fine of twenty-five hundred pounds (Charles II was always in desperate straits for money).

This affair had a tragic sequel. During the fall of 1684, while Rousby was in the performance of his duties on a vessel called the *Quaker Ketch* then anchored in the Patuxent River, Colonel George Talbot, one of Baltimore's friends, came aboard. Talbot was evidently drunk. According to Thomas Allen, the captain of the ship:

Talbot came running down to the cabin. Christopher Rousby when he saw him, rose from his chair and asked him to sit down, for we were at supper. He declined to join us, saying that it was his fasting-day, but I made him welcome, and when supper was ended he fell to kissing of me. I desired him to forbear for I was no woman, and then he hit me a blow on the heart and a box on the ear. He did this again a quarter of an hour later, and I told him I would stand him no longer; and then he said that he and I could not be friends till we had fought on shore, and I told him I would not refuse him. He then tried to kiss me again, but after a time he asked me to drink Lord Baltimore's health, and I said, with all my heart but Lord Effingham's (then Governor of Virginia) first, to which he objected, so I said that Lord Effingham's must come first or no healths at all.

Then Mr. Rousby came and sat down on the opposite side of the table to Colonel Talbot, and presently he said he

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would go, but Talbot said he would sleep on board. Then Talbot went to Rousby and said: "Rousby, you son of a whore, you dog, give me your hand," but Rousby refused unless he gave him better words. And Talbot said again, "Rousby, you dog, give me your hand. Don't you know that I am your Governor (this was a boast that he was Lord Baltimore's favorite) and can do you a kindness?" Rousby answered: "I don't value anything you can do to me." And with that Talbot started up and pulled Rousby's cravat to pieces. (How familiar this sounds!) Rousby said nothing but rose up to go, and Talbot started up and met him, and clapped him on the right shoulder with his left hand, saying, "dear Rousby," with his dagger under his coat in his right hand, and then stabbed him in the right breast. My servant called out, "He has stabbed him," and my doctor who was standing by seized Talbot, and the men presently removed Talbot, while the doctor went to look after Rousby. But in half an hour Rousby was dead. I ordered the corporal to put Talbot in irons, but while this was doing, Talbot said that nothing troubled him so much as that he had not stabbed more, that he hoped to spill and drink a thousand of our bloods, &c.

Rousby and his brother John are buried on the south shore of the Patuxent near its mouth, and their graves are still marked with a joint stone referring to these events.

Notwithstanding the protest of Lord Baltimore's officials, Captain Allen carried Talbot to Virginia and he was clapped in jail at Gloucester; Madame Talbot, his wife, went to Gloucester in a shallop accompanied by certain "red-haired Irishmen" and assisted him to escape. A great "hue and cry" was raised, but the Colonel evaded capture, "fleeing and betaking himself for refuge to the remotest parts of the woods and deserts." He was

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reported seen at various places; he even had the temerity to return to his own plantation though it was watched. He was said to have found a refuge on an island in the Susquehanna where he was fed by his own hawks, i.e., falcons. Finally, perhaps through "remorse of conscience," he surrendered. At his trial in Jamestown he pleaded that he had killed Rousby "without any manner of premeditated malice in the height of his passion for which he most heartily beg'd God & the King's pardon." He was found guilty, but did in the end receive a pardon from the King. He has a county over on the Eastern Shore of Maryland named after him.

On a bold bluff at the St. Mary's side of the harbor, stands Mattapani—accent on the final syllable. The present sober brick mansion is only two hundred years old, but some of the earliest history of the province clusters around the spot. The surroundings have changed very little, and in paddling off the beach, or walking on the edge of the bluff, one could easily call back the scenes of three hundred years ago. Being only a few hours' ride through the woods from the first settlement at St. Mary's City, it was the natural outpost of the colonists on our river.

The name is first mentioned by Captain John Smith in 1608 before there was a Maryland. He found a tribe of Indians living there whom he found "most civill." Fifteen years passed before the Patuxent was again visited by white men. This was "Master John Pory, Secretarie of Virginia," accompanied by one Estinien Moll, a Frenchman. They likewise found the Indians friendly. Namenacus, King of the Patuxents, came to greet them. The Indian, showing his naked breast to the white men, asked if they saw "any deformitie upon it?" Pory said

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no. "No more," continued the King, "is the inside, but as sincere and pure. Therefore come freely to my countrie and welcome." Later with Namenacus and his brother, Wamanato, Pory went "a hunting to discover what I could in their confines. . . . Wamanato brought me first to his house where he shewed mee his wife and children and many Corne-fields. Then he presented me with twelve Beaver skinnies and a Canow, which I requited with such things to his content that he promised to keepe them whilst hee lived, and burie them with him being dead." Brothers Namenacus and Wamanato sound like Congressmen beating their bosoms.

Trouble presently arose. King Namenacus was accused of harboring a fugitive from Virginia and also of breaking various promises. At one place, Pory says, some of the savages "perswaded us ashore upon the point of a thicket, but supposing it some treacherie, we returned to our boat. Farre we had not gone from the shore, when a multitude of Savages sallied out of the wood, with all the ill words and signes of hostilitie they could." Pory then put the Indian chiefs ashore and departed in disgust for the Eastern Shore.

Eleven years later when the first Maryland colonists arrived, the Werowance (or King) of Patuxent was called Maquacomen. Governor Calvert, hearing that the Indian chief was a "great lover of the English nation," sent his brother George to visit him. Maquacomen promised George Calvert that "there shall none of them (the English) bee killed by my meanes." He protested that "I love the English so well that if they should goe about to kill me, if I had but so much breathe as to speake, I would command the people not to revenge my death, for I know the English would not doe such a thing, except

it were through mine own default." Maquacomen had nothing to learn from congressional oratory either.

His expressions of good will suggested to the Jesuits the wisdom of establishing a mission among the Patuxents in order that they might "scatter more widely along the bank of that great river the seed of faith." Maquacomen welcomed the idea, and gave the Jesuits land at Mattapani on which the priests built a storehouse in which they kept "most of their bodily supplies." The saintly Father White himself undertook to convert Maquacomen to Christianity. Upon proceeding to Patuxent ("Barchuxem" the good man spells it), he was kindly received; but suddenly the Werowance changed his mind. He began "to procrastinate, then by degrees grow indifferent, and lastly in an open manner to break off altogether from the design he had commenced." Governor Calvert recalled Father White, not wishing to expose so valuable a man to the perfidy of a savage.

However, friendly relations were renewed, and Father Roger Rigby was sent to take charge of the mission at Mattapani. He was successful in converting the young queen of the Patuxents and her mother. His work was interrupted by an attack from the dreaded Susquehannocks, the mortal enemies of the Patuxents. Some men were killed and the house plundered; it appeared as if the mission must be abandoned. It was finally decided to send Captain Henry Fleet to the head of the bay "to arrange a reall & firme peace or truce with the Susquehannocks."

George Alsop, the indented servant who wrote *A Character of the Province of Maryland*, describes the Susquehannocks as: "the most Noble and Heroick Nation of Indians that dwell upon the confines of America

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. . . being a people cast into the mould of a most large and Warlike deportment, the men being for the most part seven foot high in latitude, (sic!) and in magnitude and bulk suitable to so high a pitch; their voice large and hollow as ascending out of a Cave, their gate and behaviour strait, stately and majestick, treading on the earth with as much pride, contempt and disdain to so sordid a Center, as can be imagined from a creature derived from the same mould and Earth."

Mattapani was also the scene of a brush between the adherents of William Claiborne and Lord Baltimore. Claiborne, a Virginian, was already settled on Kent Island when the first Maryland settlers arrived; he refused either to get out or to acknowledge Lord Baltimore as his master, and for many years was a thorn in the side of the Calverts. In 1635 Claiborne's pinnace, the *Long Tayle*, Captain Thomas Smith, appeared off Mattapani for the purpose of trading with the Indians, and flying her "Ancient." The *Long Tayle* was the first boat built in what is now Maryland, and Claiborne was no doubt immensely proud of her. One can picture the scene which then took place because another of Claiborne's men has left us a graphic account of such trading. I quote from Semmes:

Our trade with the Indians for furs is alwaies with danger of our lives. We usuallie trade in a shallop or small pinnace, being sixe or seven Englishmen encompassed with two or three hundred Indians. And it is as much as wee can doe to defend ourselves by standing upon our guard with our Armes ready & our gunnes present in our handes. Two or three men must looke to the trucke that the Indians doe not steale itt, and a great deale of trucke is often stole by the Indians, though we looke ever so well to itt. Also a

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great parte of the trucke is given away to the Kings & great men of the Indians for presents, and commonlie one third parte is spent for victualls and upon other occasions.

He goes on to describe how:

The usuall manner of the trade is to shew our trucke, which the Indians will be very long and tedious in viewing, and doe tumble itt and toss itt & mingle itt a hundred times over, soe that it is impossible to keepe the severall parcelles asunder, and if any trader will not suffer the Indians soe to doe, they will be distasteful with the Indian traders, & fall out with them & refuse to have any Trade.

Shortly after the *Long Tayle* had dropped anchor at Mattapani, Captain Henry Fleet and Captain Humber "with a company of men came over land thither from St. Mary's." They demanded of Captain Thomas Smith what right he had to "truck" with the Indians in that vicinity. Smith replied: "By vertue of his Majesties' Commission and letter graunted to Captain Claiborne," of which he said he had copies. It is noticeable in these old encounters that before proceeding to blows, each side always demanded to be shown the other's "papers."

Captain Fleet said that Claiborne's license was no good in the Patuxent and Captain Humber remarked that it was "a false coppie" anyhow. "Come, let us board them," he said to Fleet. Smith warned the two that "they had best take heede what they did, for it was not good jesting with paper which came from his Majestie." He also asked to see their papers "by which they tooke us, but they would shew mee none." The *Long Tayle* was seized; some of her crew were put ashore and compelled to travel to St. Mary's on foot. Those who remained on board, including the Captain, were ordered

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“to weigh anchor and fall Downe towards Maryland” (i.e., St. Mary’s). They had to obey in order to look after those of their men who had been sent overland.

The Governor, Leonard Calvert, hectorred them roundly. “Did you come, Sirrah, from Mattapani?” And upon an affirmative answer: “Sirrah, how durst you trade there, knoweing it was in the precincts of this Province?” He kept the *Long Tayle*, and all her goods were put ashore. The doughty Captain Smith, while pleading for the restoration of his vessel, actually traded with the inhabitants of St. Mary’s under the Governor’s nose. Finally, Smith says:

Seeing noe hopes of having our vessell againe, I desired the Governor wee might returne home. . . . Hee graunted wee should goe, but said hee was sorrie hee had noe boate to send us home in, although having at that tyme three boates riding at his dore. I told him if there was noe other way I would make meanes with the Indians, which he graunted I should do. The next day wee were sent away in a cannow without either peece (arms) or victualls but one peece which I had myselfe, haveing twenty leagers to goe (to Kent Island) without any meanes but such as wee should find from the Indians. With great danger it pleased God to send us safe home.

Naturally this was not allowed to pass without reprisals. Claiborne sent Lieutenant Radcliffe Warren “in a little boat like a wherry” to demand the return of the *Long Tayle*. He didn’t get it, but he did seize “a boate with some trucking stuffe belonging to Maryland,” which he brought back to Kent Island. Later Claiborne learned that two of the Marylanders’ pinaces, the *St. Helen* and *St. Margaret* under Captain Thomas Cornwallis were actually cruising in the Poco-

moke River, on his side of the bay. Warren was given command of the shallop *Cockatrice* with a crew of thirteen men, and sent after them.

Finding the enemy in the Pocomoke, Warren, though he was greatly outnumbered, bravely "charged with gunnes and pistolls, swords and other weapons upon the two pinnaces." Cornwallis ordered his men to be ready to repel boarders. He shouted to Warren and his men to keep off, but the *Cockatrice* sailed down on them. One can picture how the affrighted birds rose and the little animals fled through the woods at the sound of the shots and the clashing of swords on those quiet waters. The *Cockatrice* was finally beaten off. The gallant Warren and three of his men were killed, and one man on the other side.

The quarrel was now carried before His Majesty's High Court of Admiralty in London. But Claiborne didn't wait upon the deliberations of that august body. He fitted out another expedition "to sett sayle to Potomac and Patuxent Rivers or elsewhere to demand of them my Pinnace and men . . . or missing of them, make staye of such boats of theirs as you can light on." At the same time, hearing that Captain Cornwallis was continuing to trade with the Eastern Shore Indians, Claiborne sent his best man, Captain Thomas Smith, with orders to capture his boat. Unfortunately (Raphael Semmes says), the records give no clue as to what happened to these two expeditions. Possibly they were successful because Claiborne was quiet for the next two years. He then got into financial difficulties and sailed for England—but he came back to give a deal more trouble to the Calverts.

At Mattapani during the administration of Charles

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Calvert, third Lord Baltimore, the Governor built "a very fair House partly of Brick and partly of Timber" for himself. During my early days at Solomon's I could still trace out its foundations. The most important magazine in the province was also on the place and a fort. Some earthworks marking the fort remained until my day. The three buildings stood on a high bluff commanding a splendid view up and down river. In the Governor's house meetings of his Council were sometimes held. As it was thought that the savages "doe know that our whole Magazine lies at Mattapany, and that it is possible the Indians may endeavour to surprise that house first, whensoever they shall Designe any mischiefe," a guard of between twenty and thirty men was stationed in the fort nearby. Nine pounds of tobacco a day (about two shillings) was allowed to buy provisions and drink for each soldier. For "his Lordship's house," was provided a special guard of "twelve horsemen, fower & twenty footmen, two Sergeants & a Corporall." Later this guard was removed, which proved to be a mistake. A band of pirates swooped down on Mattapani, and nearly succeeded in carrying off His Lordship, the Governor. N.B. The guard was restored.

During the years that follow, there are innumerable references to the storage, repair and issue of arms at Mattapani. The last scene of the Calvert rule of Maryland took place there. Cecil, the second Lord Baltimore, who was truly a great man, had contrived to navigate his ship safely through all the storms of the great Civil War in England; the overthrow and execution of Charles I, the rule of Parliament; the protectorate of Cromwell; the restoration of Charles II; and he lived on afterwards to enjoy fifteen years of peaceful rule.

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Cecil Calvert never visited his Maryland. His son, Charles, who was made Governor in 1661 and became Lord Proprietary on his father's death in 1675, was a man of lesser stature and the repercussions of the second Civil War in England (1688) overthrew him.

When James II, that stubborn Catholic, was driven out of England and William and Mary crowned, Charles Calvert was living in England. He promptly issued instructions to his acting governor, William Joseph, to proclaim the new monarchs in Maryland, but his orders were lost, and the seeming failure in loyalty gave John Coode and other malcontents their opportunity. Baltimore was a Catholic; that was his crime. Coode and his men spread stories that the Catholics were conspiring with the Indians to massacre every Protestant in the Colony. Like all rabble-rousing, it was only too successful, and Coode was presently able to march on St. Mary's at the head of two hundred and fifty men. The state house surrendered without firing a shot. This was in 1689.

Nothing succeeds like success, and Coode presently marched over to Mattapani, now with eight hundred men and two large cannon that they had borrowed from a ship. Upon arrival the cannon were trained on the fort. A temporary truce was arranged while a trumpeter bore Coode's terms of surrender to the garrison. Governor Joseph replied, asking the rebel leader "for a parley in the hearing of the people." Coode must have felt that his cause was bad, for he flatly refused. In fact, he did not tell his own officers about it. Instead, he had one of his own men ride into the encampment in a lather, with a faked dispatch which said that the Indians were rising and that a planter had just been discovered

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“with his belly ript open.” How like modern propaganda! The news aroused a terrible excitement in the camp of the besiegers. There was talk of an immediate attack on the fort. Governor Joseph and his Councillors had no choice but to accept Coode’s conditions of surrender. The first of which was that thereafter no “Papist” should hold an office of any kind in Maryland.

Subsequently the solid men of the Colony, Protestants and Catholics alike, petitioned the King to restore Lord Baltimore’s proprietary rights, but at that time on both sides of the ocean feeling against the Catholics was running too high. The Calvert family was deprived of all part in the government—however, they were allowed to keep their rent rolls.

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HOWEVER INTRIGUING THE GHOSTS OF THE PAST, THE living people around the mouth of the Patuxent in 1914 played a larger part in my life. I had friends up and down both shores of the river. The St. Mary's side was originally settled by Catholics and royalists, whereas on our side they were Puritans and parliament men. Even now a distinction is to be seen between their descendants. In St. Mary's County they are more assured socially, have an ampler view of life; while in Calvert our outlook is simpler, more direct. I like them both, but our people a little better. Hard-working farmers and their wives who have inherited a tradition of good breeding, are well-rounded humans.

On the St. Mary's side, a little above the island, lived an old lady who had married first a Garnell and second a Buhannon, both honored names in our parts. Her household consisted of her eldest child, Miss Euphemia Garnell, her youngest, Johnny Buhannon, and the latter's wife and small children. Johnny farmed the place. Mrs. Buhannon was a very old woman, and Miss Euphemia even then elderly. The former I remember chiefly by her teeth, which required a continuous gentle champing to keep them in place. When she forgot to champ, the upper set incontinently fell down, forcing her to turn her back for adjustments.

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It was a delightful house to visit. They were poor, but they had a civilized outlook. Miss Euphemia was a great lady in the best tradition; broad-minded, discerning and generous-hearted. From the waist up she was of the usual matronly dimensions, but when she sat down she covered all of two plain chairs. Being of a hospitable disposition, she gave many parties in a pavilion that she had built on her brother's place. It was at this time that the dancing craze was gathering its first momentum, and many a night that summer Miss Mollie's daughter and I paddled up the quiet river to dance at Miss Euphemia's. Our great-hearted hostess caught the craze just like any smaller woman, and somewhere she learned to dance. She refused, however, to dance with me or with any of the men guests, because, she said, she had not invited us for the purpose of imposing such a penance. Instead, she tipped the young hired men on her brother's farm, and one of them appeared each night, freshly bathed and slicked up, to steer the monumental Miss Euphemia through the turkey trot and the waltz.

Further down the river on the same side lived the Rylands, a delightfully inconsequential family. There was Doctor Ryland, an innocent, rosy-cheeked man, who searched your face with a gaze that contrived to be both intent and vague, while he engaged in gentle converse, of which the thread always just escaped you. He was a superior horticulturist and was fond of presenting his guests with unexpected fruits, such as ripe figs or a scarlet persimmon as big as an orange. His wife was a great talker, too, and given to an innocent parade, but a woman so kind and simple, you couldn't help being fond of her.

The dominant factor in this household was the doc-

tor's mother, Old Lady Ryland. She had been a famous belle before the war, and in old age was magnificent. I have the clearest picture of her in a gorgeous dress of crimson taffeta set off with much heavy, gold jewelry. There were still yellow glints in her hair, and she displayed a lovely round forearm when she put out her hand to be kissed. I'm afraid she found the times sadly degenerate; when she did meet a man with any notions of gallantry, it was fine to see the fire come back into her old eyes. She liked to have such a man sitting beside her where she could tap his wrist with her fan, and enlarge on her theory that the two lost tribes of Israel were now embodied in the English and American peoples. Her reasons for believing it were far from clear.

Old Lady Ryland liked to take the air in a flat-bottomed skiff on the river, with a negro to row, another to sit behind her holding an umbrella to shield her from the sun, and a small black child at her feet to wield a fan if required. In the course of time she fell sick and seemed about to die. In those days, when there were no automobiles nor good roads, we had to be forehanded in our preparations; and her son telephoned to the city for a casket and flowers. The old lady did indeed pass into a state resembling death, but as the steamboat was arriving, she unexpectedly revived and came down to dinner. The casket was hastily slipped into the cellar, and the flowers put on the dinner table. In the end, of course, the casket was used.

The chatelaine of Mattapani at this time was Miss Letty Tazewell, a lady of whom we were a little in awe because she was reputed to be a great stickler for propriety, and an enthusiast for genealogical trees, of which

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we possessed only the rudiments. However that may be, Miss Letty was an accomplished hostess, a witty woman, and thoroughly at home in the great world. The old house was very attractive with its wide central hall having an open door at each end, and its stairway hidden in the wall. Among Miss Letty's friends was the Bentztown Bard, who gave a reading from his poems to the assembled neighbors in her garden. Now, twenty-four years later, his daily poem still appears in the Sunpaper; and he gives readings over the radio.

On the island itself, the man I liked best was Cook Webster, the storekeeper, a smallish fellow of a dry and leathery aspect, whose age it was impossible to guess. When he died a short while ago it turned out that he was only a few years older than myself, yet when I had first come in 1908 he seemed almost middle-aged. In thirty years he changed scarcely at all. He was always dressed in a full suit of store clothes and a derby hat. He loved to drive a sharp bargain, and was gleeful when he succeeded in overreaching you. The prices in his store were all but confiscatory; all these years we have been roaring with pain under his exactions—yet we never traded anywhere else. On the other hand he had the kindest heart in the world; in times of stress on the island, he "carried" the entire village, until the oystering or the tourist trade looked up again. For this reason, nobody has ever been able to compete successfully with his store.

He always had a cigar in his mouth but I never saw him smoking it. The cigar was an index to his feelings. When he was elated it pointed heavenwards; when he was discouraged it drooped; when he was excited it went round and round in circles. Always when the cigar fi-

nally disintegrated, he flung it on the ground in a rage, and stuck another in his mouth. This hot temper of his often exploded with absurd effect. Starting out on a ducking expedition one winter's morning, he was unable to make the engine of his motorboat turn over. Snatching up his gun in a passion, he shot the engine.

Having taken to the automobile somewhat late in life, Cook was one of the world's worst drivers. On certain corners in Baltimore they have an odd little kiosk for the traffic cop, that is mounted on casters and during busy hours, rolled out from the curb. The cop stands inside and when the weather is cold, he shuts the door on himself. Cook, driving to town, came to one of these corners and, having the "go" signal, started across. He had a young companion in the car who told the story afterwards. When he was halfway across, the cop blew his whistle for traffic to move in the other direction. Cook, thinking he had done something wrong, instantly threw his car into reverse and started to back up. He hit the kiosk and toppled it over with the cop inside and the door beneath. Whereupon he threw his transmission into forward gear and sped away up the street. "Hadn't you better stop?" suggested his companion. "Stop!" said Cook indignantly. "If I stop he'll arrest me!" By the time the imprisoned cop succeeded in rolling over his coop so that he could open the door, the car was out of sight and Cook never received a summons.

Cook had a penchant for long words which he used with highly original effect. When he was campaigning for state senator, on the platform he would be so carried away by his feelings as to become completely incoherent. It was the county joke of the year; crowds came to hear Cook speak, anticipating comedy. They laughed

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at him and loved him. It was said at the time that no Democrat could be elected in our county because of the negroes, who are still voting with Abe Lincoln's party, but Cook was returned to Annapolis with a handsome majority. Once I put him in a novel, complete with derby hat, cigar and long words, and he was the first to relish the joke. He is gone now, and there is a gap in the community.

Of all my friends, the first were Robert and Gertrude de Barril, who lived in the huge, run-down mansion at Drum Point. This remote house with different sets of characters is the scene of my novel, *Ramshackle House*, and also of my play, *Who Sups With the Devil*. An unnaturally tall structure topped with a "cupalow," it is an anomaly in our county, and it has a curious history. Shortly after the Civil War there was a Peruvian called Felipe Bareda, who obtained a valuable concession from his government to remove guano from certain islands in the sea. This he shipped to the United States to be sold as fertilizer. He was taking in great sums of money, and as the political situation in Peru was unstable, it was the part of wisdom to keep his money in the United States. He therefore sent his younger brother, Frederick Bareda, to our country to receive the proceeds of the guano, and invest them.

Apparently, Frederick became infected with delusions of grandeur, for he put his brother's money into two great landed estates, and a home on Madison Avenue in New York City for himself. One estate was Beaulieu at Newport, Rhode Island, the other was Drum Point, Maryland. Whatever brought him down to our neck of the woods, I don't know. He purchased a magnificent tract of twenty-five hundred acres with four miles'

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frontage on Chesapeake Bay and a mile on the river. In his early days, John Hack had worked as a laborer and stable boy on the Drum Point estate, and he has told me some particulars of that time. On the highest bluff fronting the harbor, with the deepest water at its foot, Bareda chose a site for his house that a king might have envied. An ancient graveyard occupied the spot; he had the gravestones and the bones dug up and cast in a gully, and John Hack said the workmen prophesied that no luck would ever come to that house. As a matter of fact, none ever has. Unfortunately, architecture was at a low ebb in the late sixties and the house is hideous; but it was a county marvel in those days, with its iron lighting fixtures, each designed to hold a cluster of four kerosene lamps, and its bathroom and water closet, the only ones in the county for upwards of forty years.

Frederick Bareda laid out bridle paths and carriage roads in every direction through the woods. At one time, John Hack said, there were five hundred employees on the place, and when the master and missus and the young ladies departed after one of their visits, all the hands lined up in two rows extending from the gate down to the private steamboat wharf to bid them good-bye. "The family had a kind word for each and every one," said John Hack, "and be Jesus! (tipping his cap) there wasn't a dry eye among the lot of us!"

Mr. Ed has an anecdote of that time. It seems that he and two of his young cronies, Ellick Somervell and John Horsley (he who acted as Marshal of the tournament) started a fox somewhere up the county, and after a long chase finally ran him to earth on the Drum Point estate. While the dogs were digging out the fox, Mr. Bareda watched the operation with interest, and afterwards in-

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vited the three young huntsmen to lunch in the big house. "There was a little bowl of water at each place with a slice of lemon floating in it," says Mr. Ed, "and I eyed 'em askance, never having seen the like. Howsoever, I knew that Ellick Som'vell was used to good living, and I watched what he did. When he dip his fingers in the bowl and dry them on his napkin, I follow suit. But John Horsley, he didn't know no better, he took up his bowl between his two hands and drunk it off."

The golden age of Drum Point only lasted for a few years. In addition to his real estate operations, Frederick Bareda speculated in Wall Street. According to the story current in the county, he is said to have dropped three million dollars on Black Friday (1873). This is no doubt an exaggeration, but at any rate the brother in Peru rushed up to the United States. There was a grand family row, and the Frederick Baredas appeared no more at Drum Point.

So the long decay of the house began. There was no attempt to sell the place at this time, because the Drum Point Railroad was being spoken of, and if that had come through, it would have enriched the owners beyond the dreams of avarice. The terminus and the town site were surveyed upon their property. The road was planned to carry coal from the mines to tidewater. The project dragged on for years; the road bed was actually graded and trestles built over the gullies, but the rails were never laid. The story is, that the Baltimore Chamber of Commerce succeeded in spiking the enterprise. Baltimore keeps its harbor open only with continual dredging; while one of the finest natural harbors on the Eastern seaboard is that at Drum Point.

A note here about John Hack. When he lost his job

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at Drum Point he obtained permission of the owners to open a small store on the beach, and here he laid the foundation of his fortunes. Since there was nobody living in the vicinity, his trade was with the watermen. These were the dark days when oyster pirates cruised up and down the bay, high-jacking the legitimate tongs and dredgers. Such vessels shanghaied their men in Baltimore and after a season of the cruelest hardships "paid them off with boom," i.e., knocked them overboard. A store in an inaccessible spot like Drum Point would naturally be a favorite stopping place for these gentry. Whisky was the main staple and John Hack grew rich. He must have been very different in those days; it was impossible to picture the flabby, lisping old man we knew in such a role. The place became such a scandal at last that the noise of it reached the distant owners, and John Hack was invited to vacate. He moved up the river and opened a store that became a pattern of peace and quiet. The only reminder of lawless days was the loaded revolver which always lay on a shelf under the counter.

To go on with the Baredas; they had a sister married to a supposedly wealthy Spaniard, resident in New York, by name, John de Barril. When Mr. de Barril died, his debts exceeded his assets and his six luxurious young children were thrown on the world without any preparation to meet it. In this emergency, the owners of Drum Point sent one of their nephews, Alexander de Barril, down to the place to act as steward until the railroad should come. His stipend was to be thirty dollars a month, together with what he could make off the land. Since a couple of hundred acres had been put under cultivation, this seemed liberal enough; but of

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course the spoiled child of the rich man's family couldn't make anything off the land. It must have been a truly dreadful situation for him; the roads built by his uncle had washed out, and he was almost completely cut off from his kind. Small wonder that he went to pieces. Once more scandalous stories began to circulate about Drum Point, these having to do with alleged orgies in which the negroes took part. Among other things, it was said that Alexander, too indolent to cut wood on the place, chopped up the heavy Victorian furniture to feed his fire in winter. In the end it became evident that Alexander was really unhinged, and his brother, Robert de Barril, came down to look after him.

Robert, the handsomest of a handsome family, had become an actor when he was thrown on his own resources, and toured the country for several years as a member of Madame Modjeska's company. Later, having educated himself in the law, he became a partner of the celebrated Dan O'Reilly of Thaw case fame. Robert was one of Nature's gentlemen, and his gorge rose at what was entailed in the practice of criminal law in New York. Unable to stick it, he moved to Baltimore and set up in practice there. It was during this period that he heard of the pickle that his brother Alexander had gotten into at Drum Point.

Meanwhile, Robert had married a beautiful Irish-Canadian girl whom he had met in New York where they attended the same church. It was wholly characteristic of his quixotic (and inconsiderate) nature, in other words, his Spanishness, that he now decided he and Gertie must go to Drum Point to live, where they could take care of the mad Alexander.

So they came: Robert, who looked like a Spanish

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grandee, and Gertie, his gently-reared Canadian wife. An oddly assorted household, for in Alexander the family physique had petered out; he was only an inch or two over five feet and already, as a young man, obese. Robert was a better manager than Alexander, but not much better. He succeeded in getting tenants to work the place, but they usually cheated him and quit. Besides the thirty dollars a month, the only income the trio could depend on was derived from the wool and the increase of a small flock of sheep. In the course of time Alexander's condition became such that they were forced to send him to a mental institution, where he at length died.

Gertie never speaks of those first days at Drum Point. It must have been a difficult time for her. The place had acquired such a lurid reputation no one would go near it, and to the simple Marylanders, the exotic Robert was hardly less mad than Alexander. Some years passed before the county folk got to know Mrs. de Bar-til. When finally they met her they surrendered to her charm, and by the time I came along in 1908 the situation had improved. Alexander was gone; Robert and Gertie were being visited by the pleasant people around the harbor, and were visiting them in turn. Robert in any company was a social success; an unforgettable man. They had a motorboat now. It was an aged and tedious little motorboat, which with terrific clamor moved through the water at the pace of a snail—when it condescended to move. I would hate to compute how many hours of her life Gertie has sat out in the middle of the harbor in that wretched craft while Robert sweated over the balky engine.

It was characteristic of Robert that as soon as he

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heard there was a writing man staying at Miss Mollie's, he should come to call in form. I was immensely taken with the man; his noble bearing, his original, explosive style of speech; his old-world courtesy. The factory-made khaki suit he was wearing only set off his air of distinction. When he invited me to his house I made haste to accept, and that was the start of the warmest friendship of my life. Nowhere else have I felt so completely at my ease as at Drum Point. I almost lived at the old house until, years later, I got a house of my own.

Recollections of Drum Point crowd so thickly it is difficult to reduce them to any kind of order. Gertie was red-haired, Irish; compact of understanding and sympathy; quick with laughter. In all those years I never saw her out of temper for more than a minute or two at a time, and God knows she had reason enough to be. She had no servant except on certain rare occasions, when there was a distinguished guest to be entertained, yet somehow she kept that big house in order, and was always herself a pattern of neatness. The moment you entered the door you were conscious that it was a lady's house, though she had but little to do with, since Aleck had fed most of the furniture to the stove. Besides caring for the house, she raised chickens and turkeys and kept a dairy; she put up jellies, preserves, pickles and sauces; she made wine. She was always in a breeze of activity; scampering through the house or up and down the long stairs as if she had a hundred feet. She would no sooner get upstairs, it seemed, than the voice of the lovable, exasperating, helpless Robert would resound under the lofty ceilings: "GERTIE!!!" He had always lost something, and she would scamper downstairs to find it for him. However, it is not Gertie's housekeeping

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that I would extol; there are perhaps better house-keepers; it was for her gaiety, her heavenly sweetness of temper that we loved her.

The place was distressingly run down, but Gertie neither apologized for it nor repined. Lawn grass had long ago given place to a rank growth of the highly odorous weed we call horsemint. The front steps collapsed and we mounted to the front porch by means of a couple of shaky boxes. The yard fence was down in a dozen places, and an amiable old horse wandered around, as well as other stock, so that Gertie could not have a flower garden. She was not on that account, however, to be deprived of flowers. By degrees a long row of blooming plants extended across the front porch, potted in a queer assortment of tin cans, boxes, crates, etc., and there were always flowers for the table. Her chief treasure in the porch garden was a night-blooming cereus. For several nights we sat up, waiting for it, to be rewarded at last by the wonder of its tremulous opening.

That long porch with its royal view was our sitting place in fine weather. A splendid old wistaria vine climbed up one of the posts and festooned itself under the eave overhead. The creatures at Drum Point partook of the happy-go-lucky character of its masters, and very often while we sat there, a certain hen would fly up into the vine and squat among the leaves. After a quiet interval, suddenly an egg would smash on the porch floor in front of us. Whereupon the fowl would look down from among the leaves with an expression of hen astonishment. She never learned any better.

Speaking of creatures, Gertie started with a single cat, and at one time the tribe had increased to seventeen. Only one or two favorites were permitted in the

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house, but when Gertie ventured out the whole seventeen would follow her about with their tails held high. They were a miserable parti-colored, moth-eaten crew, owing no doubt to too close family relations, but be sure of it the saddest one was always Gertie's darling. The arrival of each new family of kittens was an occasion of fresh pleasure to her. She was ridiculously soft-hearted. Once she found a half-grown hog who had escaped his pen, busily rooting under a wire enclosure she had put up to protect her little chickens. In a passion she snatched up the nearest missile, a short length of board, and flung it at the hog. He ran away squealing, carrying the board on his back. Gertie literally had nailed him. Whereupon she experienced a revulsion of feeling and chased the hog back and forth through the yard with pitiful tears running down her cheeks. It was a long time before she could forgive herself.

Robert was a man in the round. He had everything—except the faculty of making money. He was both ingenious and handy; he did all things well; but being what he was, most of his activities were of the non-income-producing sort. He was an expert and artistic photographer; he had a passion for music, and succeeded in making out of the materials at hand, a sound box for his phonograph which was better than anything else in use at that time. Over in the store on the island, he became involved in a discussion with Cook Webster respecting the motorboat engine that Cook in a fit of rage had shot with his ducking-gun. Taken out of the boat, and thrown on the beach, it had lain half-buried in the sand for several years. Robert bet Cook ten dollars that he could dig it up and make it go. In the

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end he won the bet, but it took all his best working hours for a whole season.

In one of the old churches he found an ancient pipe organ of superior make. It had broken down, and as there was nobody capable of repairing it, had lain unused for many years. Robert got it as a gift, and bringing it home, took it all apart and put it together again, and made it work. God knows how much time he spent on this, but he was happy in doing it. As a result he had a very fine instrument, and he forthwith taught himself to play it. In addition to the organ, being Spanish, he could play the guitar; moreover, he had a good baritone, which he had been taught how to use. In that house for the first time I was encouraged to let my voice come out, and in singing, more than the voice was freed. With Gertie at the piano we had many a vociferous sing-song in the parlor. They couldn't make a vocalist of me, but at least I have retained enough to know the difference between good singing and bad when I hear it, and have by so much increased my area of enjoyment.

Robert had a powerful and curious mind, but if one may use the phrase, it functioned in a vacuum. He was widely read in economics and sociology, and had thought much on those subjects, but in his ratiocinations he left out the human factor. His thinking was not conditioned by his experience of life; consequently it was sterile. He spent himself in trying to make life conform to a preconceived theory. His whole philosophy was founded upon the premise that man was by nature wicked, and of course his own generous heart was a standing refutation of it. He never could see the anomaly. But what a passionate and eloquent talker he was!

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In the course of years he evolved a completely new economic system for society, which we always referred to as "five per cent." I never understood it clearly, but I was convinced it was impracticable because it left out so many things. It was far too simple to contain a world. Our arguments on the subject thundered nightly under the dining-room ceiling at Drum Point, while Gertie listened with a smile, secure in her woman's wisdom. It was immensely stimulating. In a slack and flippant world, Robert was a reminder of the life of the mind. He was the sort of man with whom you could quarrel without rancor. The more we disputed, the better I loved him. When he grew old I could no longer argue with him, because I had become too fond of him.

As years passed, more and more visitors came to Drum Point, attracted by Robert's brilliance and Gertie's sympathy. Sometimes, I suspect, the number was embarrassing to the impecunious de Barrils, but the guests were not permitted to see it. Beside the people of the two counties, there were yachtsmen and other seafarers who, having called at the house by accident the first time, always came back. A couple of Baltimore young men of intellectual, Bohemian tastes, who were on a hike along the Bay Beach, were so charmed by their entertainment in the last house that they brought their friends down, and for several years Drum Point was the meeting place of a group of clever young people from town. On one occasion nineteen of us, yachtsmen, hikers and callers, sat down to supper. Gertie, like those marvelous Chinese cooks one hears of, could evolve a delicious meal out of the air. A storm came up, nobody could go home, and she put us all up for the night. I slept on the floor in a third-story bedroom with a light

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blanket to wrap around me as a protection from the mosquitoes.

When the clever young people were there, the arguments became many-sided. The cleverest one among the young men and myself were predestined adversaries, because he maintained the aristocratic point of view, while I was ever fiercely for the have-nots. As I had no particular love for him anyhow, our disputes were perhaps not without rancor. At the time there was a small grandnephew of Robert's staying in the house, an ugly little imp, and very winning; the sort of kid who is forever breaking a leg or cutting off a finger. Hearing the loud, quarrelsome voices on the porch, John came sidling up to me, holding a hand behind him. "Here, hit him with this," he said, producing a thick stick.

There followed another and less happy phase at Drum Point. Old friends died, young friends married, and the visitors dropped off. Robert found it increasingly difficult to obtain a tenant in such a remote spot, consequently the de Barrils grew even poorer. The motorboat became so decrepit that finally the engine dropped through the rotten planks, whereupon Gertie once more was a prisoner in the big house. The road from Drum Point was only practicable in fine weather. It was seven miles around the head of the creeks to the state road, and thirteen miles by road to Solomon's Island. Anyhow, my friends possessed no road conveyance. Robert at this time used to walk along the harbor beach for a mile and a half and borrow a skiff to row across to Solomon's. He brought the groceries home in a grass bag over his shoulder.

Gertie's only woman neighbor and friend at this time was "Miss" Alice Weems, wife of the lightkeeper at

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Drum Point. A half-mile of beach separated the spidery lighthouse from the mansion, and Miss Alice often popped in for a gossip. She was a tiny old woman with a face full of the wrinkles of good will. She had borne and raised a family of sons in the restricted quarters under the light. They had gone out into the world and she and her old husband carried on alone. Miss Alice had neither been coarsened nor hardened by her strenuous life. She never forgot that she was a lady born. She was seasoned with the salt of character and her conversation was delightful. She and Gertie appreciated each other's worth.

Nor was Miss Alice to be trifled with. She owned a piece of land up the bay shore, and, hearing that Cook Webster was loading railway ties from her beach, she sent him a polite notification that it must stop until they had come to some agreement about beachage, or whatever is the proper term for the use of a shore. As the loading went on and no answer to her letter came, she decided to take matters into her own hands. Next morning when the laborers arrived on the beach to start loading, the diminutive figure of Miss Alice rose from behind the pile of railway ties with a gun. There was no argument. She was paid.

Mr. Ed remarked the other night that he had been present at Miss Alice Weems' wedding sixty years ago. "Me and the bride and Old Hickory are the onliest persons still living who were there," he said. (Old Hickory is my father-in-law, the doctor.) Mr. Ed chuckled as his mind went back. "The minister was called Mr. Feast," he said, "and he was right fond of the bottle. So all of us fellows made it up together to see if we could get him drunk. First one offered him a drink and an-

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other, and when we set down to supper all was watching him close. He slip down a little in his chair, and a little more, and a little more, and all of a sudden he went clear under the table. Gemmen! how we laughed!" Mr. Ed suited the action to the word. When he had recovered himself, he continued:

"I mind Old Hickory that day, he had borrowed a horse called Richmond from Charley Solomon to ride to the wedding. He tied him to a post outside the door that had a big bush of honeysuckle behind it and partly twined around. All the boys had hidden their bottles in that bush, not wanting to take them into the house, but Hickory, he didn't know that. Well, some fellow went out to get his bottle, and he scare Richmond a little. The horse jerk back on the post and all the bottles fell down, jingle-tingle-ingle. You ne'er heard such a smash. The horse pulled the post over and back halfway across the field!"

At Drum Point during that last difficult period, Ger-tie in her quiet way was always working to pry Robert loose. They couldn't be worse off anywhere else, she argued, and they might do better. Her task seemed hopeless, Robert was so set in his ways, but in the end she succeeded. They moved to Baltimore and Robert took his little still with him. As with everything else, he had become extraordinarily proficient in making prune brandy. In the city his friends of long ago exerted themselves on his behalf. Through one of them, he got a job in the City Hall in Baltimore, at a salary sufficient to support them in comfort. In fact, Robert in his old age was a brilliant success in the City Engineer's department. No doubt it was the first time a man of his parts had ever worked in the City Hall. They were lucky

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to get him. It is pleasant to report that for fifteen years longer he had an easy and untroubled life, with a new and wider circle of admiring and affectionate friends. His mind was still so fructuous, and he bore himself so gallantly, nobody realized that he was growing old. He died in 1938, aged seventy-eight.

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IN THE CHARLES' GIFT VENTURE, I HAVE MENTIONED, MY erstwhile partner was backed by his brother, and his brother was engaged in the business of travel agent. When the world went to war in August 1914, travel stopped, and it became evident that the brothers would not be able to meet the notes they had given me in payment of my share in the concern. Nor, indeed, was the elder brother in a position to continue maintaining Ab on the farm until it should become self-supporting. Their ill luck was my good fortune. When I heard of it, I realized what a hold the place had on me in spite of my difficulties there, and I offered to take it off their hands. It was not really bad luck for them, for by this time it was apparent that Ab had mistaken his vocation, as very young men often do, and no blame to them, either. As soon as Ab went to town he began to prosper, and he has since become very prosperous indeed, in a different field of activity. Meanwhile, I became the sole proprietor of Charles' Gift.

I entered into possession in the spring of 1915. One of the clauses in our agreement specified that Ab's mother should have the house until fall, and during the first summer I came back to my tent and boarded at the house. Meanwhile, for my own mother, I built on

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the river bank what I fondly supposed was a colonial cottage. It was my first essay in building, and most people praise its quaintness, but my discriminating and honest friend, Shermie Potts, instantly pointed out a mistake I had made in the roofline. He was right, and the praise of others has no savor. I have to pass the cottage every time I go to the river, and that damned roofline has reproached me for twenty-three years.

On returning to the place in 1915, I found many changes, some of which were good in my eyes, others not. At any rate, I should have preferred to be consulted beforehand. There was a clause in the agreement that the horrible icehouse by the gate should be demolished, and that was gone; also the malodorous stable behind the house; all to the good. Behind the house, I say, but when you have a house on a fine site with an approach to it from the other side, it is always a question which is the front and back. Our predecessors at Charles' Gift considered the land side the front, the porch was on that side, and they built a stable in what was their rear. But the stable obstructed our view on the river, and it had to go.

To this day we have not satisfactorily settled the question of which is the front of the house. We look on the river side as the front, and let visitors drive up to the kitchen door. Strangers are apt to find it disconcerting. There are seven doors opening on the outer air, in the present Charles' Gift, and strangers go wandering all round the house, trying to decide which is the proper door to apply at. When observed from the house, a member of the family runs out and chases them until overtaken. When I built the addition, I put in a regular front door, painted it green and screwed on

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a handsome brass knocker. But of all the seven that door seems to be the hardest to find. I cannot remember ever having heard the knocker knocked. I must knock it myself to hear how it sounds. True, we might continue the driveway on around the house, but that would spoil the look of the yard, and we are united against that.

To return to 1915, I found that the ancient fence of palings around the house had been removed and the yard plowed up. That was no doubt necessary because the yard was too small and it had to be plowed before we could start a new yard, but it was distressing to find the old house standing naked in the raw earth. There were no trees on the land side. Once a pair of English walnut trees stood there, which were described to us as having been sixty feet high, and famous throughout the neighborhood. During his brief proprietorship John Hack had sold them to a timber cruiser for twenty dollars! Such crimes are hard to forgive. The bare earth around the house was not the worst feature. Ab had undertaken to excavate a sunken driveway, God knows why; there was something wrong with his drainage, and pools of water stood on the impervious clay until they turned green. My first job was to fill in that hole and level it off. That may be why we have never had a proper driveway since.

In the beginning, there was a road past the stable and straight on to the river bank. It hit the bank at its highest point and went down in an ugly precipitous slide to the beach. Ab found a natural, gentle descent, a little to the right, and he obliterated the old road. That was his greatest improvement. His road, rounding agreeably down to the water (we keep it in grass) was and is one

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of the most attractive features of the grounds. It is bordered now with a row of cherry trees, and on the other side a long bed in which jonquils, iris, peonies and various summer flowers bloom successively. Behind the flowers grapevines are trained over a wire fence; not very scientific, but decorative. The curving road also provides an ideal site for my colonial (?) cottage which occupies a knoll looking down on it; but far enough off to the right so as not to obstruct the view from the main house.

On the other side of the house (back? front? well, anyhow, the river side) the yard was plowed up also, and all summer whenever the wind blew, everything in the house was sifted with yellow dust. On this side there were two mulberry trees, each with an immense spread, and a tall old cherry. In the spring of 1915 we planted a slip of weeping willow between the two mulberries, and you should see it now! At the north end of the house there stood, and still stands, the unique, the incredible pear tree. According to neighborhood tradition, it is as old as the house, but that can hardly be. The tree surgeons estimated its age at a century and a half. Picture a pear tree, about forty feet tall, and still to all appearance in the verdant, thick-leaved bloom of youth. In the moonlight it stands like a piece of sculpture. Every summer it drops untold bushels of inferior pears which daily have to be raked up and carried away—they make good compost; but in blossoming time it is glorious. When I built the addition I put a window on the stairs to enframe it.

The palings around the yard had been replaced with ugly posts and wire, and I had made up my mind this had to go. I knew where there was a fence of hand-riven

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locust palings probably two hundred years old, and I could have had it for a gift. The palings were four inches wide, and never having been painted, they had taken on a glistening silvery patina. It would have been a very distinguished fence; but after thinking it over, I decided that growing hedges around the yard would be kinder to the eye. The house stands in a wide flat; it needed the hedges to separate it from the fields, and to give it an entity. So I passed up the palings.

Inside the house I found an even more startling change. The whole lower floor had been thrown into one room. It had been agreed from the first that the cheap lath and plaster must go, but Ab had not stopped there. When he took out the lath and plaster, he had two rooms of unequal size. The larger had a pair of doors on the river side and another pair opening on the porch, and the walls were wainscoted in Maryland pine from floor to ceiling. At one end there was a huge chimney piece, likewise wainscoted, with a paneled cupboard on one side of it, and a quaint stairway on the other. The stairway has six steps out in the room, then goes through a doorway and turns on itself between chimney and wall. The smaller room, used by the farmers for a kitchen, was wainscoted to a chair rail only, plaster above. It had a similar chimney, paneled to the ceiling.

The two rooms were divided by a brick partition of a later date than the house walls; the bricks were smaller and of a different texture. This partition served no structural purpose, for it supported nothing overhead. The evidence suggested that this interior wall was erected in the eighteenth century, and the wainscoting put in at that time. The paneling is definitely eighteenth

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century in style. The first builders of the house slapped plaster directly on the brick for an interior finish; patches of it still remain. As in the case of other old houses, it was a later generation that felt the need of more elegance indoors. I would put the date of the wainscoting around 1730, because certain characteristics suggest that it was done by the same hand that paneled the older part of Sotterly across the river. Sotterly was built in 1730. He was a good craftsman but untaught. He had seen a dentated molding somewhere, and his attempt to reproduce it from memory makes an architect smile.

What the original layout of the house may have been, can only be guessed at, because the builder left no plan. My guess is, that it was all one room as at present, for two reasons; there is a reference somewhere in the old records to "the greate room at Mr. Preston's"; secondly, we found an ancient wrought-iron hook let into the middle of the ceiling, evidently for the purpose of supporting a lighting fixture. Since it was in the middle, must it not have been all one room? The original kitchen was in a separate building at the south end, connected with the main house by a "curtain." I found the kitchen foundation in plowing the yard. In his will, Richard Preston speaks of a "store" (storehouse) on the place, and there were other buildings, too, judging from the number of brickbats we turn up in plowing.

Ab demolished the central brick partition. With the paneling that he obtained from one side of it, together with that taken from both fireplaces, he had enough to finish out that part of the wall which had been wainscoted to the chair rail only. He then had a completely

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paneled room forty-three feet long, with an immense brick chimney piece at each end. What I would have done if it had been put up to me, who can say now? We love our great room so well, it is impossible to picture the house planned in any other way. But I wish that more thought had been given to it before the work was started. Mr. Ed did the woodwork. He is a first-rate carpenter, but there are certain places where he was forced to patch the panels, from which I avert my eyes. And the two chimney pieces cry out for the panels which were raped from them.

Richard Preston, the builder, had ideas in advance of his time. All the other seventeenth-century houses that I have seen, have low ceilings whereas ours is ten feet nine inches high; and the row of tall windows looking to the river also is unique for the period. Long ago the fourth window was bricked up. They first made a door there, doubtless leading to a shed room, i.e., a lean-to. When the shed was removed, the aperture was bricked up entire. If that window was restored, the symmetry of our living-room would be improved; on the other hand, there would then be no wall space wide enough to accommodate our big bookcase. So the window remains bricked up.

The inside measurements of the house constitute what architects call a double cube. In other words, it is twice as long (forty-three feet) as it is wide (twenty-one feet six inches) and twice as wide as it is high (ten feet nine inches). It has long been known, they tell me, that there is a special virtue in these proportions. Preston, the doughty Puritan, must have known it; he could hardly have hit on it by accident. Another reason for inclining one to believe that he planned it for a single room.

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At any rate, there is something extraordinarily satisfying in the mere shape of the room. It is not too big to shelter two people happily, nor too small for sixty.

It is the fireplaces which first provoke exclamations from the visitor. Each is big enough to make your bed in. The fact that they were obviously not constructed by compass and plumb line gives them a special charm in this mechanized age. They start wide and foursquare on the hearth and gradually draw in towards the ceiling with many a casual curve and bulge. Both arches are a little cockeyed, and one is bigger than the other. They are quite unscientific and wasteful of fuel—what did the pioneers care about fuel? the bigger the log, the less chopping. I suppose sixty per cent of the heat goes up the chimney. When the bricks become good and hot, though, a very little fire will keep you warm. We have something that goes with a fireplace which the pioneers lacked. That is, our overstuffed sofa drawn up in front of the blaze to keep your back warm.

The two hearths were broken and sunk and had to be rebuilt. I was sorry to find, on my return, that the old tiles had been thrown away. It was a type of tile I have not seen elsewhere; red clay about six inches square, corrugated and glazed. I don't know why anybody should lay corrugated tiles on a hearth, but so it was. Ab found some big square slabs of bluestone on the place, enough to make one hearth. The other had to do with plain cement. According to a neighborhood story, old man Dixon had ordered the stones for the purpose of lining his grave, but he was put away without them. The first time we sat down before our hearth, just as the fire got going well, there was a series of small explosions and we found ourselves bom-

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barded with splinters of stone. Bluestone, we learned has that property when heated. Since then we have been careful to keep a good bed of ashes under the fire.

Ab built a wooden kitchen against the south end of the house, using the existing door for entrance. After we got a kitchen in the new wing, this little shed became a playhouse for the children. Once when they came home from Europe speaking a jargon of Italo-English, they started calling it the Casa di Playhouse, and the name stuck. Now that they are too big for play, it might as well be pulled down, but we can't bring ourselves to do it; it would leave such a gaping hole. It is no thing of beauty in itself, but in the course of years it has become covered all over with honeysuckle, and is distinctly a part of the setting.

In the beginning, as one may see by testimony of the bricks, there was a porch or portico over the door of the old house on the river side. For many years I have been looking for the right porch to rebuild there, but I have not found it, and until I do, I will not risk spoiling the façade. Meanwhile, we have trained honeysuckle over a frame at the entrance to finish it off, and to keep the afternoon sun from blazing into the room. The oak doors here are probably the originals. Though deeply weathered, they are still sound and tight-fitting. They never had a latch nor a lock, but were fastened at night with a bar across. The doors on the other side are better preserved because there was always a porch on this side. This pair of doors now leads from the big room to the newer part of the house.

Upstairs when we first came there were three little bedrooms in a row, each with a narrow pointed dormer looking towards the river. The hall serving these rooms

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ended in a fourth hole no more than big enough to slip a cot into. Ab made no changes upstairs except to tear out this cell in order to get a bigger and airier room at the end. Along each side of the second floor under the eaves extended what is known locally as a cuddy. In a house only a story-and-a-half high, it serves the purpose of an attic. John Hack told me that when he reshingled the house he found the cuddies stuffed with old books and documents, "some of them on sheepskin." Having a vague notion that this stuff might be valuable, he carted it to his own place and stored it in the loft of his stable. But in the course of twelve years "it all got blown away and used up to start fires." This is the sort of thing that makes the historian gnash his teeth.

Perhaps Ab's best service to the place was in christening it Charlesgift, or, more properly, Charles' Gift. Thus it is written on Lord Baltimore's rent roll. The historic name is, of course, Preston, or, as sometimes written, Preston-at-Patuxent, but for a century and a half the farm to the east of us which occupies a part of the original grant, has been known as Preston, our place being called simply, the Old House, and we had to find a new name. In the old records Ab discovered that in 1652 an additional grant of one thousand acres on the bay had been surveyed for Richard Preston, which he called Preston Clifts or Charles' Gift, and thence came our name. But it is hard to figure why Preston called it Charles' Gift, because in 1652 the first King Charles had been beheaded, and the second was in exile. And Preston was a Puritan anyhow.

The summer of 1915 was a busy time for the new proprietor. As soon as the cottage was finished, we built a garage under an arm of the big pear tree; we had an

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artesian well drilled on the beach, and piped the water up to the house. Our first primitive waterworks was no more than a barrel mounted on what Mr. Ed calls trussles outside the kitchen window, but it was wonderful to have a flowing tap.

In addition to all this, I was running the farm again. Old man Smiley was gone with his crew, except the rosy-cheeked Willy Johnson, who now worked by the day. My new farmer was one Jimmy Lewis. Jimmy was a young man with a trim figure and a comely face, already a little marred by self-indulgence. Glib of tongue and slack of mind, he was a worse than indifferent farmer; he hated the land; the only thing really that interested him was the pleasures of the flesh. While we worked together in the fields, he would be retailing his amatory adventures of the previous Sunday "over home." There is something ingratiating about a completely shameless person. Is it that one feels a kind of gratitude towards him for being a little worse than oneself? I couldn't hate Jimmy. Affecting to take pity on my lonely state, he invited me to come over to St. Mary's with him of a Sunday in search of adventure. A certain recondite gleam in his eye suggested that his real motive in asking me was the hope of getting something on the boss. At any rate I declined. It was interesting to hear how Jimmy and his kind behaved, but at the thought of sharing in it, my skin turned clammy.

The Lewises were installed in a miserable shack on Mears' Point at the far end of the farm. Jimmy at twenty-seven had been married for ten years and there was a child of about that age, a sallow little girl with a face so hard and eyes so knowing, I was positively afraid of her. Her mother, who was about the same age

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as Jimmy, was already a broken woman; she seemed to get a satisfaction in flaunting her slatternliness. Jimmy, the rustic Don Juan, hated her. He beat her every Saturday night with a thin slat that he kept for the purpose. Nearly half a mile away I could hear her yells as he chased her outside the house, and the whack of the slat when he got in a lick. Once with a grin he showed me the well-worn slat where it stood behind the door from Saturday to Saturday. I wondered why the woman hadn't burned it up. Evidently she got an emotional satisfaction out of the beating. What a bringing up for the child!

After a while, Jimmy fetched his younger brother, Clem Lewis, over from St. Mary's to help on the place. Clem was as handsome a young man as you would find in a year's journey; blond, blue-eyed and stalwart as a St. Michael, the warrior saint. Incidentally he was almost mindless; the simplest instructions had to go through Jimmy, whose cursing was the only language Clem could understand. But he was a joy to look at! One of Nature's capricious compensations. Clem brought a wife with him but they didn't stay long. Thereafter on Saturday nights all four of them used to mix it up (with perhaps some assistance from the child) and such shrieks and roars and sounds of blows reached my ears that I did not see how it could end otherwise than in murder. Clem was the younger and the stupider, and he took it out on Jimmy by beating him up. I sent Mr. and Mrs. Clem back to St. Mary's.

Already before 1915 one or two automobiles had been purchased in the county. In our neighborhood Rudolph Coventon had the first, a Ford; and the Coventons used to take me along on the evenings when there was some-

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thing doing up county. In those days we never knew if we were going to get there; once there, we didn't worry about getting home. Fords, and indeed all cars, had a way of stopping in the road, and the driver spent a good bit of time under the hood searching for the reason. Besides there were the usual hazards of tires. When the car would run, there was the road to worry about; up to that time there was no grading or paving on our roads, and the hills were so badly washed we often got stuck *going down*. Coster's Hill, five miles from home, was our particular *bête noire*. A long, steep descent to a branch of St. Leonard's Creek and a climb up the other side; it was so densely shaded it never dried up. Once we had overcome Coster's we could relax.

Telling myself that it would not be possible to live the good life at Charles' Gift without a car, I bought my first in New York in early spring, 1915. It was a four-cylinder Buick and it cost a thousand dollars. One had money to spare in bachelor days. Not again will I experience such a thrill as went through me when I discovered that I could steer the thing; and later, when I got out into the open and saw the needle rising to twenty-five miles an hour! My children will never know that thrill; they are surfeited with marvels. Mine was the fortunate generation; the wonders were sprung upon us one at a time, with due pauses between for recovery.

As a small child, the telephone first came into use in our town, and soon after the electric light. When I was nine, the first trolley line was opened amid immense excitement, and about the same time I was taken to one of the early electrical exhibitions in New York, which was crowded with wonders. What floored me was

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something called the Edison dolls. A handsome French doll was put up; the showman turned a handle in her back (but I couldn't see that), whereupon the doll recited nursery rhymes in a squeaky but recognizably human voice. I almost passed out. Such was my introduction to the phonograph. In a few years came the moving pictures, at first called the kinetoscope, the cinematograph, or the biograph, and along about the same time (I have forgotten precisely which came first) the automobile. Some time later we saw the first airplanes, and finally, wonder of wonders, heard the radio. There will be new miracles, of course, but they can hardly have the same effect because the world has become habituated to miracles, whereas our generation was virgin.

In order to recapture the primal thrill of motoring, I like to imagine when I am driving alone at night that I have my grandfather sitting beside me with his gray beard blowing over his shoulder. He was a solid man but this would shake him! I can hear his admonitory voice: "Not so fast, grandson, not so fast!" "Why, Grandfather, this is a side road; we're only doing thirty miles an hour. When we get out on the highway I'll show you sixty." "Sixty miles an hour! What are you saying, boy! An express train does not go so fast!"

I drove down to Maryland in my new car. In those days we allowed two days for the three-hundred-mile trip. I was roundly cheated in the garages, and my spare tire and my new spring overcoat stolen. It was gratifying when I got to Calvert to hear my little canister referred to as a "big" car. We only recognized two kinds of cars then; Fords and big cars. During this summer Robert de Barril got the notion of running for the

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Maryland assembly as an independent, and I carried him around in my Buick to do his campaigning. His meetings were well attended and he presented his economic ideas with a passionate eloquence. There were never any political meetings in Calvert like those. There is no doubt of it, the people enjoyed them; but party regularity is something else again. If I remember rightly, Robert received nine votes.

One day in late summer I carried some departing guests to Owings, our nearest railway station, thirty-one miles up county. Upon starting home, we passed through a little gust of wind and rain, nothing much, but from the blackness of the clouds ahead, it was evident that they were catching it further South. As we drew near home we found fallen branches in the road, and finally in a patch of woods two miles from home, whole trees lying prone. We had to abandon the car here and proceed on foot, my apprehensions growing with every yard. Looking across the fields while we were still a mile away, we could see that the scene at Charles' Gift was ominously altered.

In short, we found every tree on the place blown down with the exception of the old pear. Five immense mulberries in and around the yard, and the tall old cherry. The cherry, which was hollow, had broken off seven feet above the ground and had knocked off a corner of the house roof in falling. The mulberries did not break; they are shallow-rooted trees and they had pulled up their roots when they went down. Each lay on the ground, presenting its gnarled root system to the air in a wall twenty or thirty feet high; a shocking scene of ruin. The force it suggested was appalling. All the trees were laid out in the same direction from southwest to

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northeast. In the house the front doors were burst in; the piano turned completely around, and a pool of water stood on the living-room floor.

From the neighbors we learned that a twister had gone through while we were up the road; one of those capricious storms that strike, bounce in the air, and strike again. Its path through our place was less than two hundred yards wide, but all our trees happened to be in it. The old house had stood up to it; the pear tree was partly protected by the house; but I do not think that rugged ancient would have succumbed in any event. After leaping in the air, the twister next struck over by St. Leonard's Creek. It blew the warehouse on Sollers' wharf into the water and caught a girl driving a buggy on the open road. She could give no clear account of what had happened. She remembered seeing the buggy leaping and whirling across the field until it collapsed in a heap of sticks. She and the horse lay down flat in the road until the wind stopped blowing.

At Charles' Gift the catastrophe was too great to be taken in all at once. It was providential that all of us had been away from home when it happened. Somebody might have been hurt, and anyhow it would have been much worse to stand by and see that destruction worked before one's eyes. The first job was to lop off the branches and saw up the trunks of the fallen trees, and remove them. This in itself entailed a heavy expenditure for extra labor; injury upon injury. The mulberries furnished us with fence posts and firewood for a long time to come, but that was a small recompense for their beauty. The old house stood nakeder than ever in the plowed earth with its single tree.

Chapter VIII

THE AUTOMOBILE FURNISHED ME WITH WINGS AT CHARLES' Gift, and I extended my acquaintance up through the Second and the Third districts. What suppers I have eaten at Long Lane, at Taney Place and at the Lindens! In Calvert County our range of victuals is narrow, and there is the greater emulation between housewives to surpass in the established lines. The art of baking hot rolls has been developed to a height not reached elsewhere. Broken open steaming, and closed again upon melting butter, they have an ambrosial quality transcending mortal food. When Tom Richett and I met at the same table, we always engaged in a roll-eating contest. This, I need hardly say, was merely a cover for our greediness. Tom had greater girth, but I am taller, and he accused me of having a hollow leg. Victory fluctuated back and forth.

My position in the county was unique. There was one other "foreigner," to wit, Frank Hampton, but he had a family. I know I was considered a little touched, but that may have helped me socially. Generally speaking, I got along better with the women than the men, because the man-woman lingo is universal. The men were apt to be shy of me because I came from New York, and was said to make my living by writing books. I was

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doubly grateful, therefore, to such up-county men as Y. D. Hance and Alex Somervell, who from the first treated me as if I were as human as themselves. The other men came around by degrees. One or two of the uncompromising county characters like Mr. Ransom Dean and Mr. Button Billings, never did learn what to do about it when we came face to face. I upset their values. They simply made out that I wasn't there.

Mr. Ransom Dean was our number one original. Once, driving his buggy in a straight stretch of road above Port Republic, he saw me coming in my new automobile. An exceedingly tall, spare, old man, he pulled up and, leaping out, stood in the middle of the road waving his arms like flails for me to stop, which I did. Mr. Dean then tied his horse to the fence, took off his coat, hung it over the horse's head, climbed the fence into the field, and signaled to me to come on. The horse never stirred when I went by.

One more anecdote about Mr. Dean. He had a package to put on the steamboat, and for some reason she was not calling at his wharf that day, so he rowed out in the creek to intercept her. The Captain, seeing him waiting, stopped his engine, and Mr. Dean maneuvered his skiff directly in the steamboat's course. The Captain changed his course a little, and Mr. Dean shifted his skiff so that he still lay in her path. The Captain bawled to him: "Get out of the way, Sir, or we'll carry you under!" Whereupon Mr. Dean stood up in his little skiff and, spreading his arms, answered cheerfully: "Let her come, Cap'n! I'll hold her!"

Ab had started a farmer's club in the Sollers neighborhood (Sollers was our postoffice in those days), and I inherited his membership. The meetings provided another

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excuse for good eating, and gave me the best opportunity for becoming acquainted with my shy male neighbors. Frank Hampton, my fellow foreigner, was also a member. Frank was a cocky, staccato, little man with enormous ears which were mobile, and capable of expressing many shades of emotion. If we came up behind the Hampton Ford in the road, we always recognized it by Fahdy's ears. It was his little girls who called him Fahdy, and the name was so right, many of us got in the habit of using it as years went by. Frank had a wife, Miss Sophy, whom it was a joy to look upon; more of her anon.

When Fahdy and I, the foreigners, were both present at a farmer's meeting, it was apt to embarrass the other farmers; but there was nothing unfriendly in their attitude, quite the contrary. On such occasions Mr. Joey Ludwell, the best farmer in the group, and pure Calvert County, would deliberately set Fahdy and me against each other on some topic of the day, and, sitting back as pleased as a child, say: "Now, Gemmen, listen, and we'll have a chance to learn something." Fahdy and I disagreed on every subject under the sun, but I was fond of the little man. The fact that we were the only outsiders in this closely-knit Calvert County constituted a bond.

During the summer of 1915 the new car carried us to many a strawberry festival; to picnics, crab feasts, tournaments, dances; and in the fall, to oyster roasts (held out-of-doors) and oyster suppers (under a roof). Of course, one has a special affection for the first car. We kept the top down in fine weather, and some of those night drives still leap vividly to mind. Why I should remember making the curve on the state road beside St. Paul's chapel on one particular night, and not a hundred

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others, I cannot tell. The car was an aid to courtship. I learned the trick of one-arm driving; or, since Miss Molly's daughter was quite as good a driver as myself, I could turn the wheel over to her and use both arms to better purpose.

For a while we had a motorboat at Charles' Gift also, but I am not sure if she had already been sold when I took over the place. Ab and I had bought her in Baltimore during the early days of the partnership. She was a sporty craft of lap-streak construction, driven by an early type of high-speed engine. There was nothing like her in our river and we counted on cutting a dash. We brought her down the bay in a big storm at danger to our lives. The skiff we were towing was torn loose and lost, but for once the engine did not fail, and we finally fetched the mouth of the river in safety.

She was a disappointment and we christened her *Gravy-boat* in derision. I suppose there were other occasions when she took us where we wanted to go, but I can't remember any, and I do remember the many seances with a dead engine under a broiling sun. We learned to hate her, as one hates an evilly disposed person. One night when there were a number of young people at the house, we all started out in the *Gravy-boat* to return a borrowed scow to its mooring in St. Leonard's Creek. We had to detour out in the middle of the river to avoid the pound nets which had been set out. The special flavor of that night comes back. It was very dark, and there was a strong steady wind like an invisible presence accompanying us; a crowd of boys and girls sitting around the *Gravy-boat*; Eloise's delicious laugh.

Out in mid-river the engine went dead. I let Ab work over it because he was the better mechanic. Meanwhile,

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the wind was blowing us as it listed. In the end we collided with a fish net; motorboat and scow severally wrapped themselves around the poles in a knot. It was impossible to free ourselves without casting the scow adrift, and how could we do that to Frank Hampton's scow? I volunteered to take my chance with the scow. She was cut adrift with me on board; the motorboat immediately drifted away on the wind and I saw her no more. She carried no lights, and the oar we usually had aboard had been forgotten.

It was a mildly thrilling experience, sitting there on the splintery deck of the scow, nursing my knees, smoking my pipe, wondering where I was going to end up. It was as dark as a hat all around; no sound but that of the resolute wind. I had a pole on the scow with which I occasionally took soundings, and in the end I found myself in water shallow enough to wield it. I had no idea where I was, but I poled in shallow water in a northerly direction, keeping close to the shore until at long last (as the stylish writers put it) I discovered that I had entered the wide mouth of St. Leonard's without knowing it. The home stake of the scow was just ahead of me. I moored her; waded ashore holding my clothes high; and set out for Charles' Gift on foot. A three-mile walk was nothing in those days. I actually got home before the motorboat party, and sat down on the front steps to wait for them. It was amusing to hear them, as they came up from the beach, commiserating with poor Bill, adrift on the wide waters. They were planning to go in search of me at daybreak. When I stood up in front of them they seemed a little chagrined.

It was a relief when the *Gravy-boat* was unloaded (at a loss) on somebody else. The canoe, though slower, was

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more conducive to contemplation. All the charms of automobiling could not wean me from the canoe. Some of the best memories are of the long paddle from Charles' Gift to Solomon's Island in the late afternoons. It is five miles. I know the course so well I could almost follow it blindfold; the red buoy off Hellen's Creek, the black buoy off Half Pone Point, the mile-long cut-bank ending in a hook of sand that is Point Patience. When the canoe grew old and began to take water, one always landed at Point Patience to dump her out. The river is less than half a mile wide here. One then cut across to Town Point on the St. Mary's side, and from thence straight to Sandy Point on Solomon's Island, where supper would be waiting at Miss Mollie's.

After supper, out on the river again, not now alone; moonlight if available, but it is the dark nights that have lingered longest. It might be thought that a canoe imposes somewhat formal relations on two, but such is not necessarily the case. In my view a man has not made the most of his youth who did not possess a canoe. Finally, the paddle home. I suspect I sometimes found that last five miles pretty long, but now what I remember is the comradeship of the river. There was a red beacon on Point Patience to guide me so far. When it was behind me, I struck out on a wide waste of water, out of touch with the land. This was the best part. If I held a course true to the North star, I was led straight to my own beach. Those starry nights have woven themselves into my being.

At the end of the summer, Ab's family returned to Baltimore, and, upon moving into the old house, I felt at last that it was my own. It was the first home I had had, for city apartments don't count, and I immediately

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began to strike down roots. I had the desire to share it, and my New York gang came down to visit me singly and in couples. Though they saw the place at its worst, they felt its charm, and joined me with enthusiasm in planning its future. We laid off and dug flowerbeds in preparation for the following season, and for inside the house the girls made lampshades, pillow covers and curtains. Shermie, the handy man, constructed a meat safe that after twenty-three years is still in use.

Mabel and Shermie came together. Both were painters and good ones, but they approached their art from opposite directions. Shermie was the academician, almost the scientist in paint; while Mabel was the vehicle of feeling. Her work, while more uneven, sometimes touched a higher point than the man's. Each of them in different ways had a genius for friendship; Mabel through an understanding of your thoughts so subtle it almost ran ahead of them, and Shermie, the imperturbable, through his honesty. He always told you, with affection, when you were making a fool of yourself. He was a tower of strength. Shermie is gone now. He bore a hard life with cheerful fortitude, and is still an influence in the lives of his pals.

I remember how Shermie disappointed me by saying that the view from the front steps of Charles' Gift was not paintable. Yet years later, I had occasion to cut down a tree on the beach which he said spoiled the composition, and I discovered that he was right. Many examples of the work of both painters hang at Charles' Gift.

After these two came Speedy, Alida, Coopie and Virginia, all girls though their monickers might not convey it. Three of them married years ago and I don't see

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them often; only Speedy remains unmarried and unchanged. There are qualities of greatness in Speedy. She received her nickname in college because of wearing a bathrobe with a cowl that reminded the girls of the Venerable Bede. Bede in the course of time became Speedy, but the real reason the name stuck and became inseparable from its wearer, was because of its perfect inappropriateness. Speedy is the most unhurried person I know. From Speedy you always hear the same clear note. Nobody can change or even sway her, but in herself she has the capacity of growth. She has been my friend for thirty years and she is still growing.

Coopie was tall and English-looking; a du Maurier drawing; the Trilby type. She was younger than the others, and her character perhaps not fully formed. She was very beautiful. Alida was French with glorious red hair and blue eyes that had a particular soft shine of their own. Alida's gentleness and stillness were deceptive for she had definitely a mind of her own. She was a comfortable person to be with. Virginia I didn't know so well; she was brown-haired and very feminine; she eluded me. I had a house; I wanted a wife; how glad I would have been to get any one of the four. Why didn't I try? The easiest thing to say is, that I loved them all so well I couldn't choose; but it is perhaps truer that they were too intelligent for me; they put my secret folly to shame. The fact that we were such good pals made it hard, too. I couldn't seem to clear that hurdle.

I also had a girl in Baltimore and one in Washington, and both visited me at Charles' Gift. I wanted to see how they looked in that setting. Would they perceive its charm or only its crudity? And there was Teresa. She was from New York, but not of the same set as the

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others. She, too, had glorious red hair, but her eyes were brown and fiery, and wherever she went the atmosphere was disturbed. Long afterwards, I was told that the county had offered odds on Teresa. An exquisite Dresden figurine, and imperious, everything had to be carried out as she ordained, or battle was joined. It was highly stimulating to quarrel with Teresa while one was free, but . . . !

All this visiting at my house put my county neighbors in a flutter. In their code a girl never visited at a young man's house, even when chaperoned by his mother, until it was a Settled Thing. These comings and goings and nothing concluded, confused them. It was obvious that I needed a wife, and they had a keen interest in the one who was to become their neighbor. Of late years, other strangers have come into the county, and from hearing them discussed, I am able to gauge the excitement that my doings aroused years ago. Matters reached such a pass at last that when Teresa was staying at my house, and the two of us started down to the island to fetch Miss Mollie's daughter back to supper, my neighbor, Mr. Joey Ludwell, sent his little boy, Mark, down to sit on the roadside fence to wait for our return. Mr. Joey wanted to know whether the city girl or the county girl was riding on the front seat. I don't remember which was that day, but it was the county girl that I married.

Chapter IX

CHARLES' GIFT (OR PRESTON) WAS BUILT IN 1650. THERE IS no date anywhere on the house, but the Maryland historians appear to be agreed that it was the first house on the property, and Richard Preston came into Maryland in 1649. There is one house in the state which may be older; Cross Manor, in St. Mary's, the home of Captain Thomas Cornwallis. 1643 is the date usually ascribed to that house, but a doubt has been raised that the present house was the Captain's first dwelling. Cross Manor has been altered out of all resemblance to its original form, whereas Charles' Gift, or at least the front façade, must look very much the same as it did when the Prestons moved in.

A little plain, brick house with a row of tall windows in the first story, a big chimney built into each end wall, and in its steep shingled roof three of Mr. Ed's "dormant" windows. I smiled as you do when I first heard him use the word, but upon looking it up I found he had authority for it. Dormant appears to be the original English word, and dormer a later importation from the French. The bricks were laid in Flemish bond, alternate stretchers and headers, and all the headers bear a bluish glaze. This must have made a pleasing pattern when the house was new, and a brave glitter in the sun. The glaze

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is dulled now and the bricks were whitewashed before we came. We have neither applied fresh lime nor tried to remove what was there, but are letting it weather off. Whether Charles' Gift set the fashion or not I can't say, but I notice that it has lately become very smart, in the fashionable suburbs of Baltimore, to whitewash brick houses in this manner. Certainly there is no quicker way of obtaining an antique finish.

As with other ancient houses, there is a tradition that the bricks were imported from England "as ballast for the tobacco ships." There is no evidence to support it. Sufficient brick to have built Charles' Gift, not a large house, would have sunk two or three of the little ships of those days. A reference to the voyage of the ship, *Virginia*, suggests that they were accustomed to use sand for ballast. Anybody could make brick, and some of the original clay pits are still to be found here and there around the state. As early as 1635 the author of *A Relation of Maryland* says: "Wee have made as good bricke as any in England." But the story of "English brick" will never die. Along the foot of the wall in front, and at the two ends runs a neat quarter-round brick base, which cost somebody a lot of trouble to make. On the fourth side the base is champfered. The roof projected on this side. A small, flat brick is used for the arches over the windows and doors, and inside the house, all kinds of queer-shaped bricks were required to face the fireplaces. Certainly these special bricks must have been manufactured on the spot.

One feels a strong curiosity concerning the Richard Preston who built this house. It was a man of taste and judgment who, having the whole river to choose from, picked out the crescent-shaped beach. An unassuming

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man, because there are several bolder, showier sites nearby where he might have placed his house, yet a man who craved to be in the thick of affairs, because he built close to the existing settlement, instead of going on with the majority of his fellow Puritans to the distant Severn river. As a matter of fact he was appointed "Commander of the North Shore of the Patuxent" in 1649, the year of his coming, with power to grant warrants of land to "any adventurers that shall make their just title appear."

He had his faults. It has been suggested that he chose this site immediately across the river from Catholic St. Mary's so that he would be in the best position to seize the government for the Puritans; but there is no proof of this. However, it is clear that Preston was an intolerant man, and on the face of his actions, ungrateful. He does not show up well by comparison with Cecil Calvert, the second Lord Baltimore. This Calvert, though he never set foot on our shores, was one of the greatest among America's founders. We all owe him a debt.

When Governor Sir William Berkeley of Virginia began to persecute the Puritans in his province, Cecil Calvert invited them to settle in Maryland with the promise of full religious freedom. They came (Preston among them) one thousand strong, and, as we have seen in Preston's case, were immediately honored and trusted. Yet they had hardly seated themselves in Maryland, when, encouraged by the success of the parliamentary forces in England, Preston and his friends turned on Calvert, drove out his officers, and set up a government of their own. All done in the name of religion, of course.

The Puritans were willing to receive religious tolera-

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tion, but not extend it. They had no sooner set up their own legislature (in the house that is now Charles' Gift) than they excluded all Catholics from representation and from voting, and promptly passed their own "Act Concerning Religion" which professed liberty, but laid down that liberty was not to be extended to "popery and prelacy." One of the burgesses went on record as saying that "poly-piety was the greatest impiety in the world." It is pleasing to be able to state that the ungrateful Puritans were in the end forced to eat their words.

Like all fanatics, they were completely inconsistent. The Puritan legislature enacted violently restrictive measures against the Quakers, and the first preachers of that faith, Josiah Coale and Thomas Thurston, who came to Maryland in 1658, were ordered "whipt out of the province from constable to constable." They wandered northward through the woods, living on berries and chestnuts; the Susquehannock Indians fed them. Yet soon after we find that Richard Preston and his closest friends, Captain William Fuller, William Durand (he had been their minister!), Thomas Meares, etc., had become Quakers!

Preston played a stirring part throughout the twenty years he lived in Maryland. There is not much in the records that brings the man actually before us, but we can build upon references here and there. As in the case of Shakespeare, his will survives to throw light on his character. The only actual words of Preston that have come down are only secondhand, and not very creditable. Obviously, there had been a bit of Jewbaiting at Charles' Gift. Before a provincial court held at St. Mary's, February 23rd, 1658, one Doctor Lumbrozo, a

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Jew, had been charged with blasphemy, and we find this in the proceedings:

John Fossett testified that 1½ year before in Richard Preston's house he had spoken with Lumbrozo concerning Our Saviour, saying that the resurrection proved he was more than man, as did also His miracles. To the first, Lumbrozo answered that His disciples stole Him away; to the second, that the miracles might be done by sorcery.

Richard Preston did testify that about June or July last, coming from Thomas Thomas' with Josias Cole (this sounds like the Quaker preacher who was scourged out of Maryland later that year) and the Jew doctor, Josias Cole asked him how did He (our Saviour) do all his miracles? And Lumbrozo answered that he did them by the magic art. Then Cole asked him how his disciples did do the same miracles? And Lumbrozo answered: He taught them his art.

In his defense Lumbrozo averred that it was Moses whom he had called a magician, not Christ. He was ordered to appear at the next Provincial Court "to make answer to what shall be laid to his charge." Under the Puritan regime the penalty was death. However, a few days later, Richard Cromwell was proclaimed Lord Protector of England, and Lumbrozo was included in the general pardon. When Lord Baltimore, the Catholic, was reinstated in his proprietary rights, full citizenship was restored to the Jew. In 1664 we find him serving on a jury.

Upon all the written instruments of the Puritan regime in Maryland, Preston's name either appears first, or next to that of his friend and neighbor, Captain William Fuller. Yet in the course of time he became reconciled with the Calverts. Perhaps after his conversion by the Quakers he became less intolerant. There must

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have been an honesty in the man that even his enemies could respect. In 1663 when Cecil Calvert was once more in the peaceful enjoyment of his Patent, we find his son, Charles, then Governor, in a letter to his father referring to Preston as "the Great Quaker." Year after year under the Calvert regime, Preston continued to sit in the House of Burgesses; on two occasions he served as Speaker and once as Secretary of the Province. He was considered an expert on Indian affairs.

Richard Preston had arrived in Virginia upon the ship *Paul of London* in 1635, being then 21 years old. One sees him as a grave young man, the kind of Richard who was never called Dick. He had already shown a talent for affairs, because he was granted large tracts of land by Governor John West (and more land later by Governor Sir William Berkeley) in consideration of the colonists he had transported. Soon he was appointed one of the justices for Nansemond County, which is proof of his high social and political connections in England. As a matter of fact, the Prestons are one of the most ancient of families, and it is worth noting that, as in the case of our Richard, they had always called their estates by the family name. The manors of Preston Richard and Preston Patrick in that part of Yorkshire which subsequently became Westmoreland, appear in the preliminary survey to the *Domesday Book*. The name Preston has been handed down from father to son ever since surnames first came into fashion during the reign of Henry II.

Being a gentleman, young Richard would naturally be berthed in the "greate cabinn" of the *Paul of London*, i.e., under the poop, where he would be spared the worst hardships of the voyage. Those were dreadful

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voyages. The commonalty slept between decks, of course; hammocks had not yet come into use, and emigrants were instructed to bring "five ells of course Canvas to make a bed at Sea to bee fill'd with straw," and "one course rugg." As an example of the indecent crowding below, take the *Ark* of "three hundred tunne" which in 1634 brought about twenty "Gentlemen of very good Fashion and three hundred labouring men," according to a letter of Lord Baltimore's. Picture the three hundred clapped below decks in a storm.

Here is one of the storms experienced by the *Ark* as described by the saintly Father White:

On the 29th the windes were all day a gathering and toward night poured forth such a sea of winde as if they would have blowen our shipp under water at every blast. All next day beinge the blessed apostle St. Andrew's day, the like cloude gathered in fearefull manner, terrible to the beholders, so that ere it began to blow it seemed all the sprightes and witches of Maryland were now set in battaile array against us. This evening the master saw the sunne fish to swimme against the sunnes course, a thing evidently shewing fearfull stormes to come; about 10 in the night a blacke cloud shede a pittifull shower upon us, and presently such a furious winde followed as wee were able to beare noe cloath at all, and yet before we could take in our maine Course, w^{ch} we onely carried, a furious impression of winde suddainely came, and splitt it from top to toae, and cast one part of it into the sea. This amazed the stoutest heartes, even of the sailours, who confessed they had seene ships cast away with lesse violence of weather, all the Catholiques fell to praier, Confessiones and vowes, and then the helme being bound up, and the ship left without saile or government to the windes and waves, floated at hull like a dish till God were pleased to take pittie upon her.

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It is hard to figure how they cooked for such numbers aboard a ship. On the *Virginia Merchant* (I quote from Raphael Semmes again), by sawing a cask in half and filling it with ballast (sand) they "made a hearth to parch pease and broil salt beef; nor could this be done but with great attendance which was many times frustrated by being thrown topsy-turvy in spite of all circumspection, to the great defeat of empty stomachs." This method of cooking, however, would not account for what the sprightly George Alsop refers to as: "Oh, the great bowls of Pease-porridge that appeared in sight every day about the hour of twelve (and) ingulfed the sense of my Appetite so, with the restraining quality of the Salt Beef, upon the internal inhabitants of my belly, that a Galenist for some dayes after my arrival, with his Bagpipes of Physical operations, could hardly make my puddings dance in any methodical order."

Of course, the passengers in the great cabin would fare better. Each adventurer was advised to bring "for his owne better accommodation . . . Fine Wheate-flower, close and well-packed, to make puddings, etc. Clarret-wine burnt. Canary Sacke. Conserves, Marmalades, Suckets and Spices. Sallet Oyle. Prunes to stew. Live Poultry. Rice, Butter, Holland-cheese, or old Cheshire, gammons of Bacon, Porke, dried Neates-tongues, Beefe packed up in Vinegar, some Weather-sheepe, meats baked in earthen potts, Leggs of Mutton minced and stewed, and close packed up in tried Sewet, or Butter, in earthen pots; Juyce of Limons, etc."

The seventeenth-century ships with their bluff bows and unwieldy rig were very slow sailors and the voyage to Maryland might take anywhere from six weeks to (as in the case of the *Virginia Merchant* above) five months.

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When food and water ran low, the plight of the passengers was terrible indeed. On the *Virginia Merchant*: "The infinite number of rats that all the voyage had been a plague, we now were glad to make our prey to feed on, and as they were insnared and taken, a well-grown rat was sold for sixteen shillings as a market rate. Nay, before the voyage did end, a woman great with child offered twenty shillings for a rat, which, the owner refusing, the woman died."

Beside hazard of storms, the passengers ran the risk of pirates, privateers, and, if they were blown too far South, Spanish men-of-war. All the little ships carried cannon, and whenever possible they traveled in company. All in all, a voyage to Virginia or Maryland in the seventeenth century was not something to be lightly undertaken. It is not surprising to read that when the ship *Josiah* set sail from Gravesend for Maryland, all the passengers and their relatives "took solemn leave of one another as never expecting to see each other any more in this world. It was a solemn time indeed. We prayed for one another."

Many died on these voyages and of those who came safe to land, many were incapacitated for weeks or months by the hardships they had undergone. A Virginia Governor said that the English merchants: "soe pester their ships with passengers that through throng and noysomeness they bring noe lesse than an infection among us." Always "where the most pestered shippes sent their passengers they carry with them almost a generall mortality." But it is again our friend, George Alsop, who draws the most graphic picture. George was coming as an indented servant (later they were called redemptioners) and there was no great cabin for him.

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To his "much Honored Friend Mr. T.B. at his House," he writes: "I Am got ashoar with much ado, and it is very well as it is, for if I had stayed a little longer, I had certainly been a Creature of the Water, for I had hardly flesh enough to carry me to land." And to his father:

We had a blowing and a dangerous passage of it, and for some dayes after I arrived, I was an absolute Copernicus, it being one main point of my moral Creed to believe the World had a pair of long legs, and walked with the burthen of the Creation upon her back. For to tell you the very truth of it, for some dayes upon Land, after so long and tossing a passage, I was so giddy that I could hardly tread an even step; so that all things both above and below (that was in view) appeared to me like the Kentish Britains to William the Conqueror, in a moving posture.

Since there is no record of any untoward happening, we may assume that the ship *Paul of London*, bearing young Richard Preston and the colonists in his charge, reached Virginia after a voyage no worse than usual. One who headed a party of this sort was called an Adventurer; i.e., he ventured his money. It was a heavy responsibility for so young a man, since every colonist had to be provided in advance with everything he might need for the first year, except livestock. In that same year, 1635, Lord Baltimore's brother-in-law had published a pamphlet in London entitled *A Relation of Maryland*, setting forth in minutest detail what should be taken overseas, and one hopes that Preston had had the advantage of reading it. A similar list of necessities had been printed in Captain John Smith's *Generall Historie of Virginia*, published before Preston was born. These lists suggest how like, after all, the life of the first settlers was to our life in Maryland today. The author

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of Lord Baltimore's list rather sardonically suggests to the Adventurer that "in case any servant die by the way, or shortly after his comming thither, the goods of that servant being sold in the Countrey, will returne all his charge againe, with advantage." From another list it is rather surprising to learn that "wickar chairs" were desired articles in trade. We still use them at Charles' Gift.

Here are Lord Baltimore's suggestions as to trade goods:

If he (the Adventurer) be minded to furnish himselfe with Cattell in Virginia, his best way is to carry a superfluitie of wollen, or linnen cloth, callicoes, sayes, hatts, shooes, stockings and all sorts of clothing; of Wine, Sugar, Prunes, Raisins, Currance, Honey, Spice and Grocery wares, with which hee may procure himselfe cattell there, according to the stocke he dealeth withall. About 4. or 5. Pound laid out heere (in London) in commodities, will there buy a Cow; (cows were expensive!) and betweene 20. and 30. shillings, a breeding Sow. . . . Hee may doe well also to carry a superfluity of Knives, Combes, and Bracelets to trade with the women Natives; and some Hatchets, Howes and Axes, to trade with the men for Venison, Fish, Turkies, Corne, Fawnes to store a Parke etc.

The last item brings us up short. Why on earth should the colonist desire a deer park when the woods were so full of deer they were a pest? Just a bit of seventeenth century swank.

Preston and his people settled along the shores of Nansemond River, a tributary of the James River in Virginia. This was the Puritan center. For a few years they enjoyed the same rights and privileges as the other colonists, but as the Civil War in England drew to a

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head, the inflammation inevitably spread to Virginia. The Governor, Sir William Berkeley, was a rabid royalist and Anglican, and the Puritans began to feel the weight of his displeasure. In 1643 the Virginia Assembly, at the Governor's behest, ordered them curtly to conform or get out. The three ministers they had obtained from Massachusetts were forbidden to preach, and they went home again. During these days, nobody in the colonies knew where they stood, for half the ships which came from England acknowledged the parliament: these were called London ships; and half the King: these were Bristol ships.

In England, Cecil Calvert, the second Lord Baltimore, was watching the course of events with an anxious eye. As a Catholic he stood to lose either way. Cavaliers and Roundheads joined in hating the Papists, and Calvert, specifically, had angered both sides by insisting upon religious freedom in Maryland. It is indicated that he became disgusted in 1643 and resolved to Get Away from It All, because in that year he was cited before the Lords and put under bond not to leave the British Isles. However, Calvert was downed only for certain brief periods. His astute and fearless way of dealing first with Charles I, then with Oliver Cromwell, and finally with Charles II earned him the respect of each in turn. In every emergency he presented his case so well that it could not be refuted. Oddly enough, years later, it was the pigheaded James II, himself a Catholic, who finally undermined the Calverts; but by that time the far-seeing Cecil had been gathered to his fathers.

As early as 1643, Cecil, seeing the way the wind was blowing, made a gesture to the Parliamentary party by inviting the Puritans of Massachusetts to settle in Mary-

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land. He was rebuffed. In 1645-46 he had the rebellion of that violent parliament man, Captain Richard Ingle, on his hands. For years afterward this was known in Maryland as the "plundering time." The royalist forces were finally defeated in England and Charles I became the prisoner of his Parliament. In 1648, Calvert invited the Virginia Puritans to Maryland, and, as their position under Governor Berkeley had become impossible, they accepted. At this time Calvert was careful to select a Protestant, William Stone, as his Governor for Maryland. Stone was put in charge of the arrangements to receive the Puritan settlers. Throughout all these troubles, Calvert's sole concern was for the well-being of his palatinate.

There is apparently no existing account of the Puritan exodus. They traveled by water, of course, for a journey overland with the necessity of crossing such mighty rivers as the James, the York, the Rappahannock, the Potomac and the Patuxent would have been out of the question. They could make half a dozen trips back and forth by water in less time than it would take to struggle once through the woods. All the early settlers were accustomed to transport their cattle and other livestock up and down the bay in shallops and pin-naces—predecessors of the Chesapeake Bay canoes and bugeyes. Preston and some others settled on the north shore of the Patuxent (it is more properly the east shore) in the neighborhood of St. Leonard's Creek, while the main body of the Puritans went on for sixty miles farther to the Severn River, where Annapolis now stands. The latter settlement was called Providence. During the journey to their new homes, the Puritans must have learned of the beheading of King Charles.

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As head of the Patuxent River group, Preston entered land for seventy-three persons. He was now thirty-five years old, in the flower of his manhood. His family consisted of seven persons; wife Margaret, and children Richard Junior, James, Samuel, Naomi, and Margaret. Two more daughters, Rebecca and Sarah, were born in Maryland. In Lord Baltimore's rent rolls it appears that "Preston" consisted of 400 acres on the north side of the Patuxent River and east side of Preston (Mears') Creek. This was surveyed for him in 1651, two years after his coming, and for it he paid a quit rent of 8s. annually. He was also granted "Taylor's Joy," a tract of 500 acres between St. Leonard's and Mears' creeks, rent 10s. This property was known thereafter as "Preston's Neck." Finally, he added "the Neglect," 200 acres adjoining Preston on the south, 4s. annually. This gave him a river frontage of two miles; a very pretty piece of land for twenty-two shillings a year! "Preston Clifts" or "Charles' Gift" was separate. This was 1000 acres over on the bay, and he paid 20s. ground rent for it. At the time of his death he owned other lands also, on the Eastern Shore.

Preston's home place is still one of the finest pieces of farming land in the county. It is a wide flat lying at the foot of the central ridge of Calvert County, washed by two deep creeks, St. Leonard's on the north, Hellen's on the south, and bisected by the smaller Mears' Creek. When he came, of course, it was covered with forest, most likely of the superb virgin pines of which I have spoken. Father White said of the Maryland forest that it was "not choaked up with undershrubs, but (the trees are) commonly so farre distant from each other as a coach and fower horses may travale without

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molestation." Consider the labor of clearing such land! Whenever I have occasion to pull up one small stump, my respect for the pioneers goes up immeasurably. The imagination staggers at the labor entailed in clearing 1100 acres of virgin stumps. Preston had already done it once before on the Nansemond River in Virginia. Presumably that had now to be charged up to profit and loss.

Chapter X

WE LOOK AROUND THE BIG ROOM AT CHARLES' GIFT AND wonder what kind of a life the Prestons led in their new home. Newcomers in the Colonies were forced to lie on straw or corn husks (as the poor whites do today) and to eat off wooden dishes; but the planter, upon selling his tobacco crop in London, was accustomed to put the proceeds into the comforts of life, good household furnishings, fine clothes, wines and the like, and after fourteen years in Virginia the Prestons no doubt brought a good store with them. Things would be rough at first. I believe that the outside kitchen was not built immediately, because I found a ring in one of the big fireplaces to hold a crane. A crane was a piece of kitchen furniture, so we may assume that for a year or two they cooked, as well as ate, in the great room. It would be more convenient—and safer.

They would always have plenty to eat. It is good now, and was better then. The woods swarmed with every kind of game, and the river with water fowl and sea food. They could raise anything that will grow in a temperate clime, and for wild fruit they had strawberries, blackberries, "raspices," mulberries, plums, persimmons and wild grapes; besides black walnuts, hickory nuts, chestnuts, etc. Let us draw on the flowery George Alsop for a description of this Elysium:

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Pleasant in respect of the multitude of Navigable Rivers and Creeks that conveniently and most profitably lodge within the armes of her green, spreading and delightful Woods. . . . Neither do I think there is any place under the Heavenly Altitude, or that has footing or room upon the circular Globe of this world, that can parallel this fertile and pleasant piece of ground in its multiplicity, or rather Nature's extravagancy of a superabounding plenty. (Good boy, Georgel)

Speaking of food, he continues:

When I was under a Command, and debarr'd of a four years ranging Liberty in the Province of Mary-Land, the Gentleman whom I served my conditional and prefixed time withall, had at one time in his house fourscore Venisons, besides plenty of other provisions to serve his Family nine months, they being but seven in number; so that before this Venison was brought to a period by eating it, it so nauseated our appetites and stomachs, that plain bread was rather courted and desired than it.

He goes on to say that the deer were so tame "they will stand (all most) till they be scratcht." He lists other kinds of game:

The Elke, the Cat of the Mountain, the Rackoon, the Fox, the Beaver, the Otter, the Possum, the Hare, the Squirril, the Monack (Woodchuck?), the Musk-Rat and several others (whom I'll omit for brevity sake). . . . The meat of most of these creatures is good for eating (!), yet of no value or esteem here by reason of the great plenty of other provisions. . . . Fowls of all sorts and varieties . . . The Turkey, the Woodcock, the Pheasant, the Partrich (Quail rightly), the Pigeon and others, especially the Turkey, whom I have seen in whole hundreds in flights in the Woods of Mary-Land, being an extraordinary fat Fowl, whose flesh is very pleasant and sweet. . . . The Swans, the Geese and Ducks (with other Water Fowl) derogate in

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this point of settled residence; for they arrive in millionous multitudes in Mary-Land about the middle of September, and take their winged farewell about the midst of March. But while they do remain and beleagure the borders of the shoar with their winged Dragoons, several of them are summoned by a Writ of *Fieri Facias* to answer their presumptuous contempt upon a Spit.

George goes on to lavish some airy plaudits on "the Fishes" but it is clear that he is not familiar with their names—his master lived in Baltimore County; and as for our most renowned delicacies, the oyster and the crab, he does not mention them. I should like to read what George might write about the soft crab. For my own part I am sure that in 1650 the five little Prestons poled themselves slowly up and down the beach with the handles of their dip nets, watching bright-eyed for the half-buried soft crabs, just like the little Footners nearly three hundred years later.

In the immediate vicinity, the Prestons had as many neighbors as we have today. At the head of St. Leonard's there was a little settlement of Puritans, the remains of whose dwellings may still be seen; next to Preston on the south lived their father's closest friend and associate, Captain William Fuller; across from him the Governor, William Stone, who was a friend, and immediately opposite Charles' Gift was Fenwick Manor, or St. Cuthbert's, the seat of the celebrated Cuthbert Fenwick, who, like George Alsop, had come to Maryland as an indentured servant, and had become one of the great men of the province. He was of the Catholic party, but there are suggestions that he and Richard Preston were friends, too. Fenwick and Preston were sent together to make a treaty with the Indians in 1654.

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There were other neighbors who were not so highly thought of, i.e., the Patuxent Indians. There was also the ever-present danger of a raid by the dreaded Susquehannocks from the north. At Charles' Gift the county is only about four miles wide, and the Susquehannocks, without having to pass the well-settled mouth of the river, could easily have landed on the bay shore and come across country. No doubt little Richard, James, Samuel, Naomi and Margaret were often warned that "The Susquehannocks will get you if you don't watch out." The Patuxents, who themselves went in mortal fear of the Susquehannocks, were a mild race, and well disposed on the whole; but the whites never understood the Indians, never could trust them; and it is true, they were unstable and subject to appalling explosions of savagery.

The little green flat at the end of our path to the river must always have been an inviting spot to land, and indeed there is a tradition in the neighborhood that it was a favorite feasting spot of the Patuxents. I can believe it, because the knoll which overlooks it, where the dower house is built, seems to be composed almost solidly of oyster shells. If this was an established meeting spot naturally, the Indians would continue to come there after the Prestons had arrived. With what dread in her heart the mother of five must have watched the painted savages coming ashore in their canoes, particularly if the men of the house were away. How she would hover the children behind her skirts in the big room, while she stood looking out, too proud to show any fear, holding the door in one hand and the heavy bar in the other, ready to slam one and drop the other in place at the first sign of hostility. Many a night she

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must have lain awake holding the youngest and wondering if the distant howling she heard was wolves or Susquehannocks.

This is how Father White describes the Indians of the neighborhood:

The natives of person be very proper and tall men, by nature swarthy, but much more by art, painting themselves with colours in oile a darke red, especially about the head, which they doe to keep away the gnats, wherein I confesse there is more ease than honesty. (Seemliness) As for their faces they use sometimes other colours, as blew from the nose downward, and red upward, and sometimes contrary-wise with great variety and in a gastly manner. They have noe bearde till they be very old, but instead thereof sometimes draw long lines with colours from the sides of their mouth to their ears.

They wear their (hair) diversly some haveing it cut all short, one halfe of the head and long on the other; others have it all long, but generally they weare all a locke at the left eare, and sometimes at both eares which they fold up with a string of wampampeake or roanoake (wampum) about it. Some of their Caucorouses as they terme them, or great men, weare the forme of a fish of Copper in their foreheads. They all weare beade about their neckes, men and women, with otherwhiles a hauke's bill or the talents of an eagle or the teeth of beasts, or sometimes a paire of great eagle's wings linked together and much more of the like. Their apparrell is deere skins and other furs which they weare loose like mantles, under which all their women and those which are come to mans stature, weare perizomata (girdles) of skins, which keep them decently covered from all offence of sharp eies. All the rest are naked and sometimes the men of the younger sort weare nothing at all.

Their weapons are a bow and a bundle of arrowes, an ell long, feathered with turkies feathers, and headed with

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points of deer's horns, peeces of glasse, or flints, which they make fast with an excellent glew which they have for that purpose. The shaft is a small cane or sticke, wherewith I have seene them kill at 20 yards distance, little birds of the bignesse of sparrows, and they use to practise themselves by casting up small stickes in the aire, and meeting it with an arrow before it come to ground. Their bow is but weake and shoots level but a little way. They daily catch partridge, deere, turkies, squirrels and the like, of which there is wonderfull (plenty?) . . .

The naturall wit of these men is good, conceiving a thing quick to. They excell in smell and taste, and have a farre sharper sight than we have. Their diett is poane, made of wheate (this is a mistake; it was corn pone, just what we Marylanders eat today), hominie of the same with pease and beans together, to which sometimes they add fish, fowle and venison, especially at solemne feasts. They are very temperate from wines and hote waters, and will hardly taste them, save those whome our English have corrupted. For chastity I never see any action in man or woman tending to soe much as levity, and yet the poor soules are daily with us and bring us turkie, partridge, oysters, squirells as good as any rabbit (better!), bread and the like, running to us with smiling countenance, and will help us in fishing, fouling, hunting or what we please.

Thus the good priest, who was of so benign and holy a presence that even the Indians were sensible of it. There are not many Father Whites, and ordinary men did not always get along with the natives so well. Here is something which happened in Charles County across the river while the Prestons lived at Charles' Gift. It is taken from the report of a trial in the Maryland Archives.

Mrs. Agatha Langworth, called to the stand, related

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how one day as she lay sick in her house "came fower Indians & knocked at the door. Her wench Lucy Good told her that shee thought it had been the Children, but suddenly Cryed Indians & flung open the door." By the time Mrs. Langworth reached the door four savages, one of them Chotyke by name, had entered. "The Dogge kept barking att him, he made some blows att itt . . . and made a back blow att her with a Tomahawke, but mist her, whereupon hee retreated backwats out of the room, thinking as she supposeth that she might shutt him in the roome." As she "clapt to the door" she saw the Indian called Maquamps then on trial, and another known as the "Old Fisherman," who had escaped. As the Indians continued to go "round about the house two or three times," Mrs. Langworth opened the window and called for help. She heard her little children crying pleadingly: "Good Nindians! Good Nindians!" Then silence.

Elizabeth Brumley, another servant who was with the children, then testified that she tried to get them together:

. . . who did cry extraordinary, and this deponent called the boy John, and sayd: "Peace, Johny!" Then this deponent turned about and saw fower Indians, Two of which was the Indian called Bennett (this was another name for Maquamps) now in custody, also that Indian called the Fisherman. But for the other two shee did not know; and that the aforesaid Bennett did then make towards one of the Children, which was a boy, and knocked him down with his Tomahauke. Whereuppon she asked him in Indian: "Kaquince machissino Chippon?" why did he soe? Who answered in Indian: "Because he would." Uppon that, this Deponent ran away with the Girle, and this Indian

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Bennett made after her, shooting arrowes, but missed her, and came up to her with the Boye's head under his arme. And she saw the old Fisherman passe her, and this Indian Bennett came into the weeds and lay down the Childe's head and sayd (to her) in Indian "Pops innahayo," (meaning) A woman with child, and struck att her with his Tomahawke three times which made three Cutts in her Capp and two Cutts in her head, and thereupon left her for Dead, and further this deponent sayth not.

A youth by the name of Thomas Haslings was then called to the stand. He had been working in an adjoining tobacco field with Bennett Marchegay. "They had just made an end of worming and succoring (suckering, a term we still use) when Marchegay asked him if he would sit and pipe it, which hee did." They began talking about savages, Marchegay remarking that he "feared they were doeing some mischiefe in that they did not come about as they used to do, when suddenly they heard Mrs. Langworth's Dogge barke, and they both sayd that surely the Dogge had mett with some Vermine. Then presently they heard Mrs. Langworth cry out: 'Away, away, Indians, Indians.'"

Both men ran as fast as they could to the Langworth plantation. Young Haslings, who got there first, said that he saw four Indians "pursuing Elizabeth Brumley the mayd, shooting after her with arrows." He was sure one of the Indians was Chotyke, but as for the others said that he "cannot say hee knew any of them having noe time to peruse them." Haslings "hollowed" at the savages, "upon which the Indians runne back to the top of the hill & shoot about a halfe a score of arrows att him." Other white men came up:

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These said Indians shott about fowrty arrowes at them. Then this deponent made up to recover the howse, which they did hinder by comming betweene him and the howse, in which time this deponent did enspect (see) John Gabbinnett with a Gun come up, Mrs. Langworth's eldest girle being chased before by the said Indians. Then the Indians all fall ahollowing and running downe the hill forced them (the white men) back againe to Bennett Marchegay's plantation. And when they desisted in pursuing them, the aforesaid Indian Chotyke shott an arrow att this Deponent, which he did defend with a Tobacco stick in his hand, when they (the Indians) met with John Gabbinnett with his gun, they all run away.

When Maquamps and Chotyke were asked if they had anything to say in their own defense they both stood "mute," and on the indictment appears the grim notation: "The Judgment of the Board—Murther."

Chapter XI

IF RICHARD PRESTON'S HOUSE HAD BUT ONE ROOM DOWNSTAIRS, how did he dispose of his numerous family when the Provincial Court was sitting there, and later, the General Assembly? True, there was another building on the place referred to in Preston's will as "the store" but it is hardly conceivable that the grave "Commissioners for Maryland" were asked to sit in such a place. Sometimes there were as many as five or six on the bench, attended by constables, witnesses, attorneys, and there would be the hangers-on that frequent every court. In some cases it is stated that "the jury retired," so there must have been a jury room. As for the Assembly, it appointed a "clarke," a doorkeeper and a guard, and it required privacy. Certainly each body in turn must have used the great room.

By this time the outside kitchen would have been built, and very likely the family was banished there while court was sitting, or the burgesses deliberating. In the landward side of the great room there is an extra outer door which, as the bricks show, has been there from the beginning. It suggests that a part of the porch was enclosed to form what old Maryland called a "shed" room. If, as was often done in the old houses, the whole porch was enclosed, there was space for two rooms; one

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for the family, the other to serve as jury room or ante-room to the legislative chamber. We also know that the early colonists sometimes divided their houses with temporary partitions of plank. If there was such a partition creating a hall from the kitchen door at one end, to the stairs at the other, everybody would have been able to move around freely, while the deliberations in the great room were carried on in privacy.

Court Day must have presented a scene at Charles' Gift not very different from "Court Day" at Prince Frederick today. It is not only those who have business with the court who gather; everybody takes a day off and drives in for a gossip. At Charles' Gift in the sixteens-fifties, those who lived over at "the Clifts" would ride through the woods, but the majority from St. Leonard's, St. Clement's, St. Cuthbert's and Mattapani would come in wherries or skiffs. One sees the boats drawn up in a long row on the beach with the humbler sort of servants lying in the sand. Black faces were beginning to appear among them. No public ferry across the Patuxent was established until 1664 but in the meantime Mistress Cuthbert Fenwick on the opposite shore had been reimbursed for entertaining travelers and "casting" them across. Then as now, the Assemblymen who came from a distance got their traveling expenses.

Around the house, still new, with its glazed bricks sparkling in the sun, Mr. Preston's young trees and shrubs would be carefully fenced from the crowd. The masters and the more highly regarded servants would be standing, just as they stand around the courthouse fence today, talking in low-voiced couples when there is private business to be discussed, or in groups exchanging the latest stories amid sly laughter. Though they

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were Puritans, they were given to the same sins that we are. It was said of one of the local big shots, not a Puritan indeed, but one of Mr. Preston's neighbors and friends, that he "had drunke something extraordinary but was not so much in drinke but he could gett out of a Cart's way." The court record suggests also that they were sinfully addicted in all the other usual ways.

Apart from the men, the women in their neat laced bodices and starched caps would be sitting on planks stretched across blocks of wood, exchanging their choice morsels of gossip with many a nod and beck and meaning smile. To this day, at Calvert County gatherings, the sexes always separate. With no newspaper, no radio, and mail from oversea at one season only, what a kick they must have had out of Court Day!

From planks laid on "trussles," refreshments of various sorts would be dispensed. I am sure that the Puritans stood in front of these improvised counters tearing hard crabs apart and sucking the delicious contents, just as we do. And they had beer to go with the crab. They also drank wine and "hote waters" and, of all things, "liminade," which appears to have been made from citric acid. The legislators over in St. Mary's held up the bill of their sutler, refusing "to pay William Smyth more than 25 pounds (of tobacco) per gallon for that which he calls Liminade without any strong drinke in it."

How this crowd must have quivered with naughty excitement and pushed to obtain places in the great room, when the Robert Taylor case came up. Since the charges were not entered in the record, and the oral testimony was not taken down, it is a little difficult to

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tell who was suing whom and for what, but the situation at the Taylor's is only too clear from the depositions. These depositions run on for page after page, all being patiently attested by "Ri: Preston." Here is the midwife; her tumbling, confused speech extraordinarily like that of the village wives today.

Ann Johnson aged 34 yeares or thereabouts, Sworne and Examined the 30th Aprill 1653, Sayeth:

That your deponent and Sarah Goulson being at the house of Robert Taylor's the 24th December at the Travail of the said Taylor's wife, Sarah Goulson Said that She Would Speake to the woman about the child, because Robert Taylor was soe grieved about it. Soe your deponent Desired her She should not (speak) for She (Mrs. Taylor) had Sorrow Enough at that Instant. Your Deponent Comeing again on Sunday after to dress the child, her (Mrs. Taylor's) sister Alice Griffin being come thither; Alice Griffin said (to Mrs. Taylor) "How now, you have Saved your Bacon!" Alice Griffin said to me: "Hath she not saved it?" So your Deponent replied: "If she have it is the better for her."

Alice Griffin said that Mary Taylor said that She wisht She might never rise if it were not Robert Taylor's child. Alce (sic) Griffin and your deponent being without doors talking about it, your deponent said it could not be soe, for there was a writing in Mr. Preston's hand would testifye the time of her (Mrs. Taylor's) going away. So Alce Griffin replied and Said She was afraid of that ugly pott belly Edward Brisley, for they two were Very Great.

Soe your deponent Comeing there on Monday againe, my child telling of me at home what She had heard about Robert Taylor say, your Deponent asked Margaret Broome whether Robert Taylor said to her that he would turne his wife and the Bastard out of doors. Soe she asked me how I heard such a thing. Soe, said I, the child told me. "O,"

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said she, "what a baggage is this! He did Say Soe, but who would have thought Such a baggage would have Said Soe" (repeated it.) . . .

So your Deponent helped Mary Taylor upp and then I spoke: "I wish you good Sitting up, but I doubt it will prove the worst that Ever you had in your Life." "Why?" said she to your deponent. Soe I replied and said: "Why? You need not question why. You know the cause of it; your Husband he takes Notice of it; he Sees the Matter is badd and knows the Matter is badd." Soe Mary Taylor replied and said he used to be soe (bad) to her. So I replied again and said: "Noe! for noe man alive could be more fond over her and the Children than he. So your Deponent tould her that she had both offended God and Shamed herself and wronged her husband and Children."

Soe whereupon her Cuzen and I urging of her to Speake the truth of the matter whose the child was, that he (the father) might take part of the Shame as well as She, Cuz told Mary Taylor that her husband Said he would turne her & the Bastard out of Doors. So said Cuz: "I am grieved to the very heart to See how your husband takes on. O Cuz," said she, "doe not let your Husband worke to Maintaine another Man's Childe." Soe your Deponent said: "Noe, truly, I would lay the Saddle upon the right horse."

So Mary Taylor Sat Still a while where She Sate and at the last She burst out Crying and said that wicked man had overcome her upon a Court day at Night being the 12th of Aprill, and I replied and said she might be mistaken, and She Said She was confident She was not. She being at his house, he came to bed with her and never but that night. Soe we replied and said: "Lord! that you should soe forgett Your Self and husband and Children in Soe Short a time!" Soe we asked her why She did not call for a pipe of Tobacco to have prevented him. Soe that the people of the house might have taken notice. Soe She was asked whose the child

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was, and thereupon She Nominated Catchmey, and Said She told him that She was with Child, and she told him she would tell her Husband of it. And he replied againe and said he would trust her for that. Whereupon we wisht her to submit her Self to her husband and that Catchmey Should take the Child, whereby She might in time gett the Love of her husband againe for the love of the Children he had already by her.

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Soe whereupon your Deponent was goeing home and she desired me for God's Sake to Stay till Such time her husband come to speake to him of it. Soe when he come in I told him that his wife Said She had wronged him, and I desired him to doe what his heart would let him for his Children's Sake. "She hath wronged me indeed," Said he. Soe She came and fell upon her knees and said: "Good husband, forgive me! For God's sake, good husband, forgive me!" "O, thou wicked base woman, how can I forgive thee? I cannot forgive thee; the Law will take hold of thee. Would I had given tenn thousand weight of Tobacco I had saved thy Creditt! Thou wicked woman, couldest thou forgett me and the Children Soe Soon! I bid thee have a care of thy creditt when thou wentest away!" Soe whereupon he bid her rise to her knees, but he did not promise her any forgiveness. . . .

Soe Cuz said: "That Catchmey! hang him! hang him!" And Robert Taylor replied and Said: "If I must hang him I must hang her." And Robert Taylor said: "I will make a poor Catchmey of him before I have done with him, for I will goe to Mr. Preston and fetch his Warrant for him, and I will Send (bring) him prisoner to Maryland." Soe Mary Taylor desired me I should not tell Catchmey of it, but bring him thither, for if he knew of it he would not come there. Soe when I come home I told my husband of it, and

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he would not let me have no hand about it to bring Catchmey thither for fear of disturbance.

And further Sayth not

Ann Johnson

“Cuzen” Margaret Broome then testified, confirming the above on the whole, but adding that Mary Taylor had confessed that Catchmey “with his Deluding Toungue, deluded her.”

Sarah Goulson put a more favorable light on the matter for Mrs. Taylor, and it begins to look as if the midwife was actuated by revenge. Sarah said that on the way to the house, Mrs. Johnson (the midwife) had told her she was going “to have a bout with Mary Taylor.”

Soe Mrs. Johnson said to Mary Taylor: “I must have a pair of gloves of you and Mr. Catchmey.” And Mary Taylor replied: “Why of Mr. Catchmey?” And Mary Taylor replied againe: “He is no more the father of my child than he is of yours for aught I know.” And Mrs. Johnson replied againe and said she was an Impudent Whore. . . . And Mary Taylor said: “It hath pleased God to make us both alike.” Whereupon Mrs. Johnson struck Mary Taylor. Soe they were busling a little while. Soe when they had done, Mrs. Johnson said that that Night’s work should cost her (Mary Taylor) a whipt back.

From the testimony of Catchmey’s sister, it appears that Catchmey was inveigled to the Taylor house a couple of days later, and the door locked. . . . “Then Mary Taylor did rise of her bed and brought him the child and he would not take it, and he clapt his hands behind his back, and still she followed him with the child, and Robert Taylor bid them have a care of the child, and not let it fall between them.”

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Mary Catchmey deposed that her brother told her Mary Taylor had said to him: " 'I never was soe taken with a man as I am with you! O, that I could love my husband as I love you!' With handling her hands in his hair and Such like Gestures."

After a lot more talk in the Taylor house, "Cuz" said to Robert Taylor: " 'Cozen how are you able to keep a knife out of his heart?' And upon that Robert Taylor tooke down his Gunn." However, Catchmey was not shot. In the end the injured husband said if Catchmey would "disburse a little tobacco he would keep the child as his own." In the beginning Taylor asked ten thousand pounds of tobacco which he said "was but a flea-biting to him" but later he came down to two thousand pounds.

When he escaped from the house, Catchmey instantly fled to Virginia. This appears from the deposition of one Cornelius Abraham, who describes how he picked him up from a small boat off Cedar Point. Some months later, Robert Taylor met George Catchmey in Virginia. The husband had had a change of heart, for he now offered Catchmey ten thousand pounds of tobacco if he would "deny what was past." Catchmey answered that: "if he were never questioned he would never question it." Subsequently the case "Robert Taylor vs. George Catchmey" appears on the calendar twice, but it never came to trial, and we may assume that, as Mr. Ed says, "Even the worst stinks blow over in time."

In describing Court Day at Charles' Gift, I am a little ahead of my story. At the time the Puritans came to Maryland, Lord Baltimore's troubles were daily thick-

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ening about his head. In 1650 Charles II was in exile at Breda, but of course he still looked upon himself as the lawful ruler of England and her dependencies, and in disregard of Lord Baltimore's patent, he appointed one of his favorites, Sir William Davenant, the celebrated wit, and playwright (Shakespeare's godson), to be Governor of Maryland. Charles was thus getting back at Baltimore for his concessions to the Puritans. Sir William never got as far as Maryland. At the same time, it appears from an angry letter of Lord Baltimore's that the Puritans had no sooner seated themselves on the Severn River than they began to make trouble. Edward Lloyd had carried a letter from them to the Assembly in which they had questioned the legality of Lord B's patent, and reserved the right to disregard his authority. Lord Baltimore warned them sternly to obey.

Worse followed. Royalist Virginia was in frank rebellion against the British Parliament, nevertheless the Parliament (not finding it convenient to chastise the colony) concluded a fair and generous agreement with Virginia in 1651. True, the hot-headed Sir William Berkeley was deposed, but it was arranged that his back salary should be paid, and further provided that "Neither he nor any of his Council for a whole year should be censured for prayers and kind words about the King in their homes and quiet social gatherings." This exhibits a remarkable tolerance for the times. Richard Bennett (who had led the Puritans into Maryland and had subsequently returned to Virginia) became Governor of Virginia, and still more ominous for Lord Baltimore. William Claiborne was appointed Secretary of State.

These two had a commission from the English Par-

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liament that was somewhat ambiguously worded. It has been suggested that the Parliament had no intention of disturbing Lord Baltimore in his rights, and that the wily Claiborne put one over on them. Anyhow, Bennett and Claiborne came to Maryland in "the *Ginny, Frigott*" in March 1652 and in the name of the Parliament deposed Governor William Stone and named a Council of six persons to assist them in governing the province. Richard Preston was one of the six. There was no bloodshed, but affairs fell into confusion and on June 28th they found it necessary to re-instate Governor Stone. In August, the Commissioners and their Council voted to uphold Lord Baltimore's patent.

Meanwhile, they were having Indian troubles. A deputation was dispatched to the Susquehannocks and later (December 2nd) Richard Preston and the other district commanders were each ordered the raise one able man out of every seven "to meet at Mattapania on December 20th to report to Captain William Fuller . . . each to have one gun well-fixt & 1½ lbs. powder Six lbs. shot (and) victuals for thirty days." Presumably Mr. Preston obeyed orders, but on December 10th we find Captain Fuller reporting that he found the inhabitants "wholly disaffected, not to the thing, but to the time of yeare." They feared they would "soe expose themselves to more dangers through cold and Necessary provisions, than by the Enememies." The Captain continues: "Sir, Let me crave this favour not to be mistaken in what I have writt. I am ready . . . but it is the present apprehension of the people That after the Extremity of the Winter be past itt will be far more fitt for this purpose."

Governor Stone discharged the forces.

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It was soon after this, that the Council began to sit as a Provincial Court in Mr. Preston's house. Preston took his court duties seriously. He is always noted as being present, whereas the other councillors were so irregular that it became necessary later to appoint additional men. Most of the causes were as tedious as those our Magistrate in Prince Frederick has to sit through today. Cattle cases appear to have been the most frequent. Occasionally the proceedings were enlivened by a suit for slander. Men registered their manner of marking hogs with the Court. Theft appears to have been rare, and assault cases seldom came into Court. A servant sues his master for sufficient clothing; another complains to the Court of bad treatment. Mr. Preston and another are appointed as referees in a husband and wife quarrel. They report "that the parties wished to live asunder" and a property settlement is effected.

Twice Preston himself appeared before the Court. In 1653 he had trouble with the man who is described in the Taylor case as the "pott-bellied Edward Brisley." It is difficult to deduce just what it was about, for Preston himself did not make a deposition. Apparently he had sold a sloop to Brisley (perhaps the same vessel that had brought the Prestons to Maryland) and had not been paid for it. Brisley is quoted as saying that: "Mr. Preston should have the sloop with all his heart, for she was an Ugly Bitch. . . . He (Brisley) would go to planting, or to Sea in Some Ship, for he was resolved to goe noe More in such open Vessels." No decision in the case is recorded. On a later occasion it is set down that: "Whereas David Stevens, having scandalously abused his master, Mr. Richard Preston, as he hath Confessed the same in open Court, The Court hath

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ordered that he Shall receive tenn Slashes upon his bare back with a whip."

On the 23rd of September 1657, one John Dandy, a smith, was brought before Mr. Preston and his fellow councillors charged with murder. This Dandy was a contentious fellow, and there had been scarcely a session of the court at which he had not been cited, either as plaintiff or defendant. In 1643 he had been tried before the court at St. Mary's for the murder of an Indian boy. The boy's name was unknown and they christened him Edward Indian after he had been killed. The evidence in this case is not set down in the record, but it must have been conclusive, for Dandy was promptly convicted and sentenced to hang. However, as he was the best, perhaps the only gunsmith in the colony, he could not be spared. He was reprieved by Governor Leonard Calvert.

In 1657 at Charles' Gift, Dandy was accused of the murder of his servant, a lad named Henry Gouge. Information was lodged by one Richard Furbear and the sheriff was instructed to go with two "Chirurgeons" (one of whom bore the quaint name of Emperor Smith) to disinter and examine the body; "the head of the Corps to be carefully lapped up and brought warily to Court." The gruesome evidence is all set forth in this case. It was not conclusive, but a pitiful tale was told of Dandy's abuse of the boy. One witness describes how he met the poor wretch limping along the road with a hole in his head and his ears "pinched" as if he had been bitten by rats.

Dandy had made things worse for himself by breaking out of jail and escaping to Virginia. Here he unwarily told his host that he had been accused of the

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boy's murder a week before he killed him. This worthy brought him back to Maryland and received 490 pounds of tobacco for his pains. The Court impaneled a "grandy jury" which promptly returned a "Billa vera," and on the following day Dandy was tried before the "petty jury," which brought in a verdict of guilty. It must have been Mr. Preston, the chief magistrate sitting, who pronounced sentence. "Said Iudgment and Sentence of Death (to) be put in Execution upon Saturday next being 3rd October upon the Island At the Mouth of Leonard's Creek in Patuxent River." This raises an interesting speculation because there is no vestige of an island at the mouth of St. Leonard's nowadays. However, Dandy was certainly executed, the first to pay the penalty of his life in the province of Maryland.

Among the cases judged at Charles' Gift was one which created such a stir, that a garbled version of the story is still circulated in the neighborhood. This was the trial of Judith Catchpole on September 22, 1656. In the popular version, Judith is dark and beautiful (of course!) and stood up to her accusers with flashing eyes and heaving breast, but that does not appear in the laconic record. One must imagine for oneself the terror and the heartbreak that filled the solitary girl. She had just landed in this strange, wild country. The charges seem absurd now, but they were not so then. The case of Mary Lee, who had been hanged from the yardarm at sea upon suspicion of witchcraft would still be fresh in the people's minds. According to the record, Judith was not permitted to speak for herself. The case opens with a declaration from the Court that has made it famous.

Judith Catchpole, Brought before the Court upon Sus-

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picion of Murdering a Child which She is accused to have brought forth . . . the Court hath ordered that a Jury of able women be Impanelled to give in their verdict . . . whether She, the said Iudith, hath ever had a child or not.

A jury of women!

The testimony follows, tantalizingly incomplete. One guesses that the "clarke" of the court, laboriously taking it down in longhand, got hopelessly behind and omitted whole sections. It immediately appears that there was more in this case than simple infanticide.

James Iolly then testified that he heard a man say that Iudith Catchpole Cut a Maid's Skinn off her throat, and She never felt it, and the said Iudith Catchpole Sowed the wound up again.

Andrew Wilcox, Sworne and Examined, saith that William Bramhall's man servant that dyed, said that when the Murther was done all the people and Seamen in the ship were asleep, and after it was done, Iudith Catchpole and the said servant of William Bramhall went up upon the deck and walked a quarter of an hour afterward, (where-upon) off they went each to their Lodging, this being at Sea in the middle of the night.

Upon reading this one feels that William Bramhall's servant, who will forever remain nameless, had during this walk on deck in the middle of the night, been repulsed by the girl, and that he had then started the story in spiteful revenge. His death shortly afterwards, of course, would have given it a tremendous impetus. The balloon swells bigger and bigger.

Elizabeth Norton, Sworne and Examined, Saith that William Bramhall's man Said that Iudith Catchpole and

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he did Grind a knife Dutch fashion, and the said Iudith prickt a seaman in the back with it, and she beged a Little Grease of the Chirurgeon and greased his back and he Stood up again, and the said Servant said that Iudith was to kill three or four men more.

However, the jury of women now reported that "according to our best Iudgment the said Iudith Catchpole hath not had any child within the time Charged."

One hopes that the great room at Mr. Preston's sounded with applause.

The Court gave judgment that, her accuser being deceased, and "no murther appearing upon her Examination . . . and also it appearing to this Court by Severall Testimonies that the party accusing was not in Sound Mind, whereby it is conceived the said Iudith Catchpole is not inditable." She was ordered acquitted "unless further Evidence appeare."

None did appear, of course, and Judith sinks into obscurity. I like to believe that she found friends in the new country and a good husband.

Chapter XII

THE PURITAN COUNCILLORS FUNCTIONED SATISFACTORILY as a court; as a governing body, not so well. The colonists across the river, unswervingly loyal to Lord Baltimore, were willing to accept the services of the Puritan judges, but as rulers they ignored them. No Englishman is willing to recognize a government in which he is without voice, and at this time there was no Assembly. A question which had been raised as to the soundness of the existing land patents burned in the breast of every colonist. After the Herculean labor of clearing his land, was he now to lose it? Lord Baltimore took the position that his patents were not completed until the recipient had taken an oath of fidelity to himself. At this juncture, we find the following blast addressed to the absent Parliamentary Commissioners Bennett and Claiborne by Richard Preston. He appears to have been a somewhat less eccentric speller than his contemporaries.

. . . By the Arbitrariness of his own will (he is referring to Lord Baltimore) he appoints Laws for us, and sets up Popish Officers over us, outing those officers of Justice appointed by you . . . And doth . . . impose an Oath which if refused by us, all our Lands and Plantations are to be seized upon to his Lordship's use; And if taken by us

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(the oath) we shall be ingaged at his will to fight his battels, defend and maintain him in his Patent as it was granted to him by the late king &c. Which Oath we humbly conceive is contrary to the Liberty and Freedom of our Consciences as Christians, and contrary to the Fundamental Laws of England; contrary to the Engagement we have taken in subjection to the Commonwealth of England, and unsuitable to Freemen . . . and contrary to the Word of God to fight for, defend and maintain Popery and a Popish, AntiChristian Government; which we dare not do unless we should be found Traytors to our country, fighters against God, and Covenant Breakers . . .

This was "Dated in Patuxent River in the Province of Maryland, 1st of March 1653. Subscribed by Richard Preston and 60 more of the Housekeepers and Freemen."

Bennett and Claiborne answered this by adjuring Mr. Preston and his friends to stand fast. Months passed and nothing was done. The Councillors kept a book in which to record their executive acts, and from a rather pathetic entry dated November 7th, it appears that in the lack of instructions from England they didn't know what to do about forming a government. Three months later a letter of Lord Baltimore's was published notifying the colonists in plain terms that they must take the oath of fidelity to make their land patents good. It was this, no doubt, which brought matters to a crisis.

In Maryland, on May 6th, 1654, Oliver Cromwell was proclaimed Lord Protector of England, etc. In July, Commissioners Bennett and Claiborne returned to Maryland and made their headquarters at Charles' Gift (Preston). It is not difficult to imagine with what assiduity and respect these great men were waited upon

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by the Preston family. They still lacked definite instructions from England, but they had to do something because the Province was now in a state approaching anarchy. During this heated season of the year, there were anxious and weighty discussions in the great room. They also had meetings across the river with Governor Stone and the Calvert party, as will presently appear. On July 22nd, the Commissioners issued a proclamation appointing Captain William Fuller, Mr. Richard Preston, Mr. William Durand and seven others "to be Commissioners for the well Ordering, Directing and Governing the affaires of Maryland under his highness the Lord Protector of England, Scotland, Ireland and the Dominions thereof, and in his Name onely and no other . . . To appoint and hold Courts, to issue out Writts, Warrants and Subpoenas &c., to summon an Assembly. All who have borne Armes against the Parliament or do profess the Roman Catholique religion are disqualified to serve or to vote."

It was provided in the Proclamation that four Commissioners should constitute a quorum, of whom Fuller, Preston or Durand must always be one. Preston was the only one of the former Councillors who now became a Commissioner. William Durand was to be secretary. In its preamble, the proclamation recites a bit of history which suggests that the Commissioners were not very sure of themselves. It is stated that Governor Stone, when first approached, had:

. . . returned onely opprobrious & uncivill language (and) presently Mustered his whole power of men and Soldiers in Armes intending to Surprize the said Commissioners and, as could be imagined, to destroy all those who

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had refused the Said unlawfull Oath. . . . Then the said Commissioners in quiet and peaceable Manner (this was intended for the Lord Protector's eyes) with Some of the people of Putuxent and Severne went over the River Putuxent and there at length received a Message from the said Capt. Stone that next day he would meet and treat in the woods. And thereupon being in Some feare of a party to Come from Virginia, he Condescended to lay down his Power lately assumed from the Lord Baltemore and to Submitt (as he had once before done) to such Government as the Commissioners should appoint under his Highness the Lord Protector.

The first General Assembly of Maryland, under the new regime, met in Mr. Preston's house on October 20th, 1654. Previously, at St. Mary's City, the Governor and his Council had sat as an upper chamber, and the elected Burgesses as a lower; now they all sat together. There were fifteen members; Mr. Preston was elected Speaker, and was further appointed as custodian of the records with John Sutton for his deputy. The two Burgesses first elected (by the Protestants) from St. Mary's County refused to sit with those whom they regarded as traitors to Lord Baltimore (there was no doubt laughter in the great room here) and a new election was ordered in St. Mary's. In the "Acts and Orders" of this session, the name of Cecilius Calvert is still set down as "proprietary."

I have already referred to the Act Concerning Religion that they passed. They went on to make laws against drunkenness, swearing, licentious conduct, slander, profanation of the Sabbath. The penalties, however, were not so severe as in Massachusetts, nor the list of offenses so long. May not this be ascribed to the influ-

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ence of our generous climate? As a matter of fact, the blue laws of Maryland were rarely invoked at all, except in the cases where somebody had a grudge to feed. Under the laws now passed by the Puritans, thieves were required to make fourfold restitution—or go to jail; and runaway indentured servants were obliged to serve double their time. Both measures appear well designed to effect their purposes.

All went smoothly until January, 1655 (this was just time enough for news of what had happened to reach England, and the reaction to come back) when the ship *Golden Fortune*, Captain Tilghman, arrived, bringing letters both from Lord Protector Cromwell and Lord Proprietary Baltimore, which showed that the former had not deprived the latter either of his patent or his land. Lord Baltimore angrily rebuked William Stone for his pusillanimity in yielding up his authority; Oliver Cromwell more gravely reprovved Richard Bennett for having gone into Lord Baltimore's plantation. Bennett was directed "to permit all things to remain as they were . . . till the said difference be determined by us here, and we give further order therein."

Governor Stone, stung by Lord Baltimore's rebuke, immediately got busy. There are various accounts of the warfare that followed, each of which must be taken with a grain of salt. Mr. Leonard Strong, one of the Puritan Commissioners, wrote the most comprehensive story (not necessarily the most truthful), which he published in London as a pamphlet under the title "Babylon's Fall." This was answered by another pamphlet, "Refutation of Babylon's Fall," by John Langford, "Gentleman, Servant to the Lord Baltimore." It was this John Langford who, more than twenty years before, had first carried to Wind-

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sor Castle the yearly tribute levied upon Lord Baltimore for the Palatinate of Maryland, to wit: two Indian arrows. The receipt that Langford got for them is still in existence. In his pamphlet, Langford quoted Scripture against the Puritan with good effect.

"Hee that is first in his owne cause seemeth just, but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him." Prov. 18. 17.

By Commissioner Strong's account, it appears that there were two separate attacks on Charles' Gift. He says:

. . . the Lord Baltimore's Officers and the Popish party began to divulge abroad, and boast much of power which came in that ship (the *Golden Fortune*) from his Highness the Lord Protector to confirm the Lord Baltimore's Patent to him. . . . That now the Rebels at Putuxent and Severne should know that he was Governour again. . . . And further, the said Captain Stone gave several Commissions to the Papists and other desperate and bloody fellows to muster and raise men in armes to be ready upon all occasions, giving out that he would go to Putuxent and seize the records of the Province . . . and to apprehend Mr. Richard Preston also, at whose house they were; which shortly was effected by Vertue of a Warrant in Captain Stone's name, without Proclaiming, or shewing any power by which he acted such high Robberies. But in threatening speeches declared, That they would have the Government; and for the terror of others would hang some of the Commissioners.

This was the first descent upon Charles' Gift. Of the incident, John Hammond, another of Lord Baltimore's men and also the author of pamphlets, writes: "Governour Stone sent me to Putuxent to fetch the records. I went unarmed against these sons of Thunder, (having)

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only three or four to row me, and despite of all their braves of raising the Country, calling in his servants to apprehend me, threatened me with the severity of their new-made law, myself alone seized and carried away the Records in defiance." Some of the historians have thrown out Hammond's boastful statement as a plain lie, because it is on record that Josias Fendall, later, was forced to pay Mr. Preston damages for an attack on his house. They have overlooked the fact that there were *two* attacks. When Hammond came, Mr. Preston was at home—Hammond describes him as "their greate but also quaking commander." The truth is that Mr. Preston was a man of peace and conciliation, and Hammond was allowed to carry away the records without hindrance. He did not, however, dare to lay hands on Mr. Preston himself, if such were really his instructions.

To return to Leonard Strong's story: he relates how some of the Commissioners (including himself but not Mr. Preston)

. . . sent two Messengers of quality and trust with Letters to Captain Stone in a way of peace and love (one can scarcely credit such meekness); desiring him to make it known by what power he surprised the Records (in other words, show your papers). . . . But the said Captain Stone instead of giving a satisfactory Answer, imprisoned the Messengers, and in much wrath and fury said he would show no power; at last he affirmed, that he acted by a power from Lord Baltimore; and that the Lord Protector had confirmed the Lord Baltimore's power. "If so, Sir," said one of the Messengers, "if it be confirmed, let that appear, and it will satisfie." "Confirmed," said Captain Stone, "I'll confirm it!" and so sent them home.

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After this . . . the said Captain Stone published a Proclamation to deceive the amazed and distracted people at Putuxent; wherein he called God to witness, that he intended not to use any hostile way to them or the people at Providence . . . but notwithstanding this Proclamation and Protestation, the said Captain Stone sent up to Putuxent one William Eltonhead (he had lately come from England) and Josias Fendall (of whom we shall hear again) and with them twenty men in Armes, who did beset and entred the house of Mr. Richard Preston, with intent to surprise him; but not finding him at home, took away in Guns, Swords and Ammunition to the value of 30£ sterling; ransacked every place in and about the house to seek for the said Richard Preston; and as some of the Company then said, with purpose to hang him. . . . At the same time they surprised John Sutton . . . and carried him away Prisoner . . . and kept him about twenty days. . . . And when they were desired to shew by what power or Commission they so acted, they would in a proud bravado clap their hands on their swords and say, Here is a Commission!

Picture the consternation of the household at Charles' Gift when the boats full of armed Papists were seen coming up the river. The distraught and ashen faces; the frantic running to and fro while they searched for the children, screaming their names; the howls of the children as they were yanked indoors; the clapping to of the wooden shutters; the slamming of the big doors. According to the traditional account, Mr. Preston was up at Providence and there were none but women in the house. They ran upstairs and, leaning out of the "dormant" windows, poured hot water on the heads of the attackers. But, since the ladies had not a constant supply, the enemy broke in. Nobody appears to have

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been injured, but the Prestons were no doubt pushed around a good deal. One can see the soldiers holding up their "lanthorns" in our cellar, and crawling through the cuddies on their bellies while they searched for Mr. Preston. Fendall is accused of having acted "with true Cavalier incivility." Somebody has called this brush at Charles' Gift "the first act of war between Englishmen and Englishmen in America."

Governor Stone, according to the Puritan story, then mustered over two hundred men and set out for Providence on the Severn River:

Some of the said Company, marching by land, others by Water; they that marched by land did much spoil and robbery in all the Houses and Plantations where they came, breaking open Doors, Trunks and Chests. . . . Having now left the Country behinde them bare of men save only such as fled into the Woods from their cruelty and rapine, as also of Arms and Ammunition; the poor women urging this to them: What should they do if the Indians should come upon them being thus strip't of men and Arms to defend them? . . . These merciless men answered scoffingly, It matters not, your sorrow is our joy. . . .

The accounts of the battle which followed consist largely of name-calling on both sides. "Captain Stone," says an anonymous Puritan writer: "threatens to have their blood, calls them Round-head Rogues and Dogs, brought whole bagfuls of chewed bullets, rolled in powder, saying, 'The Devil take him that spares any;' and so falls on upon the day dedicated to the Virgin Mary." On the other side Mrs. Virilinda Stone, the Governor's wife, says: "By all Relations that ever I did heare of, the like barbarous act was never done amongst Chris-

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tians." Hammond calls Captain Heamans a Judas, a "Shittlecock" and so on.

Amongst the confusion, a few uncontroverted facts stand out. Governor (or Captain) Stone appeared in the Severn River off Providence with eleven or twelve small bay vessels in which his force was embarked. Anchored in the river was the "great Ship" *Golden Lion*, Captain Heamans. Captain William Fuller, Mr. Preston's friend, the leader of the Puritans, had sent Will Durand aboard her with a proclamation requiring the Captain in the name of the Lord Protector and Commonwealth of England to assist him. The Captain, after some objections, finally agreed to come in on their side. Lord Baltimore's men thought Heamans was with them, hence Hammond's bitterness. Possession of the great ship made all the difference.

Governor Stone's boats came within gunshot of the *Golden Lion* "at the shutting in of the evening," and Captain Heamans was ordered to summon them to a parley by firing a gun. Stone had no cannon on his little vessels. The order was defied "with a great noise." (Bronx cheers?) The gunners, no longer able to see, sent another shot "where they heard the boats rowing," whereupon a messenger did come aboard the ship, but only for the purpose of reproaching Captain Heamans for deserting Lord Baltimore's cause. He was sent back with a flea in his ear. Stone then ran his boats into a creek, where they were out of reach of the ship, and landed his men.

They were busy all night preparing a fire-ship to send against the *Golden Lion*, but the Puritans sent "a small Barque with two pieces of Ordinance, which was commanded to lie in the mouth of the Creek, and

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so kept them from coming out." This was Sunday, the 25th of March, 1655. Lord Baltimore's men appeared in a body on a narrow neck of land near their boats, where they amused themselves by beating drums and reviling the men of the *Golden Lion*, "which caused the Captain of the Ship to give fire at them, and forced them to march further off into the Neck of Land." According to local tradition, this is the neck which lies immediately to the east of Annapolis between Spa Creek and Back Creek, now covered by the suburb of Eastport. The neck ends in Horne Point, and the engagement which took place there is usually called the battle of Horne Point.

Meanwhile Captain William Fuller, with a hundred and twenty men, had gone further up the river "with shoutings and couragious rejoycings" (I am quoting now from a Puritan account). They landed six miles away from the Baltimore camp, and, sending back their "Sloaps and Boats," made a detour by land, and took their enemies in the rear. From an account on the Cavalier side, it appears that the Baltimore men were trapped on that same neck of land where they had been regaling themselves by playing the drum and calling the sailors names; "the Anne-Arundell men (Puritans) coming suddenly upon them on the one side, and the *Golden Lyon* being on the other . . ."

Each side claims that the other began the firing. It hardly matters now. Lord Baltimore's men were trapped and they never had a show. The Puritans came on, bearing the Standard of the Commonwealth of England and crying: "In the name of God fall on! God is our strength!" while Lord Baltimore's men stood fast, shouting: "Hey for Saint Maries!" (To which, according to

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the Puritans, they added: "Hey for two wives!") For a while the battle was fierce and sharp, but as the Cavaliers were forced back towards the river, Heamans began firing at them from his ship. One account says that during the battle, the armed bark at the mouth of the creek captured the Baltimore boats with all their supplies. Some of the Cavaliers succeeded in flanking the Puritans; "from behinde a great tree fallen, (they) galled us and wounded divers of our men, but were soon beaten off." Captain Stone, wounded, and seeing the situation to be hopeless, surrendered.

Fifty of the Cavaliers were killed and all the rest taken prisoner, saving only four or five who probably escaped by swimming. One exultant Puritan writes: "All the place (was) strewed with Papist beads where they fled." Of the Puritans, only two were killed on the field, and two died from their wounds. Mr. Preston was almost certainly in the vicinity of the battle conferring with his fellow Commissioners, but he does not appear to have been in the firing line. There is no reason for expecting him to be there; he was not of the soldier type, but always appears as a messenger of peace and conciliation. The fact that he did not bear arms made it easier for him later to make his peace with Lord Baltimore. His friend, Captain Fuller, was not so fortunate.

The Puritan accounts are silent as to what followed upon their victory; they had no reason to feel proud of their behavior. The Cavalier scribes, on the other hand, become dreadfully eloquent. There was a so-called Council of War, which was no more than a drum-head court-martial; I am happy to say that Mr. Preston was not sitting upon it; Captain Heamans was. Although the

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Cavalier prisoners had yielded upon quarter being given, ten of them were now condemned to death, and four were actually executed: to wit: William Eltonhead, whom Hammond describes as a member of Governor Stone's Council; Lieutenant William Lewis; John Leggat, Gentleman, and John Pedro, a servant of Mr. Eltonhead's. Governor Stone was among the condemned, but he was saved from death by the remonstrances of the Puritan soldiers, who, Hammond says, "were pricked in Conscience for their ingratitude." The "begging of some good women" got the others off, "some being sav'd just as they were leading out to execution." The unfortunate Cavaliers were then "Amerced, Fined and Plundered" at the pleasure of the Council, Hammond says, but it is very unlikely that these sentences were carried out.

Mrs. Virilinda Stone, the Governor's wife, writes a piteous, and, under the circumstances, an extraordinarily temperate letter to Lord Baltimore. After describing briefly the battle and what led up to it, she continues:

They have Sequestred my Husband's Estate, only they say they will allow a maintenance for me and my Children, which I doe beleeeve will bee but small. They keep my Husband with the rest of the Councell, and all other Officers still Prisoners; I am very suddenly, God willing, bound up to see my Husband. They will not so much as suffer him to write a Letter unto mee, but they will have the perusall of what he writes.

She then describes how she fears that the Puritans may detain Baltimore's friend, Captain Tilghmann (of the ship *Golden Fortune*) to prevent him from going home

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“to informe your Honour of the truth of the businesse before they make their owne tale in England”; and ends touchingly: “I hope your Honour will be pleased for to look upon my Sonne (evidently in England) and for to wish him for to be of good comfort, and not for to take our afflictions to heart. And nothing else at present, I rest.”

However, true to her sex, she adds two postscripts:

“I hope your Honour will favour me so much, that if my Sonne wants twenty or thirty pounds you will let him have it, and it shall be payd your Honour againe.

“Hemans the Master of the *Golden Lion* is a very Knave (she was afraid that the *Golden Lion* might reach England before the *Golden Fortune*) and that will be made plainly for to appeare to your Lordship, for he hath abused my Husband most grosly.”

There is another blot on the Puritan victory, inevitable in their excited state of feeling; they drove the Jesuits out of Maryland. There is no account of what happened, save that furnished by the Jesuits themselves in their annual report to the Superiors of their order. Referring to the affair on the Severn, it says:

In treacherous violation of the Conditions, four of the captives, and three of them Catholics, out of extreme hatred of our religion were pierced with leaden balls. . . . Rushing into our houses, they demanded for death the imposters, as they called them, intending inevitable slaughter to those who should be caught. But the Fathers, by the protection of God, unknown to them, were carried from before their faces in a little boat; their books, furniture, and whatever was in the house, fell a prey to the robbers. With almost the entire loss of their property, private and domestic, together with great peril of life, they were secretly carried into Vir-

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ginia; and in the greatest want of necessities, scarcely and with difficulty do they sustain life. They live in a mean hut, low and depressed, not much unlike a cistern or even a tomb, in which that great defender of the faith, St. Athanasius lay concealed for many years. To their other miseries this inconvenience was added, that whatever comfort or aid this year under name of stipend, from pious men in England was destined for them, had been lost, the ship being intercepted in which it was carried. But nothing affects them more than that there is not a supply of wine, which is sufficient to perform the sacred mysteries of the altar. They have no servant either for domestic use, or for directing their way through unknown and suspected places, or even to row and steer the boat if at any time there is need. Often, over spacious and vast rivers, one of them alone and unaccompanied passes and repasses long distances, with no other pilot directing his course than Divine Providence.

It was Lord Baltimore's good fortune to have among his adherents a Doctor Luke Barber, lately arrived in the colony, and already employed by Governor Stone as an emissary to the Puritans. Dr. Barber had formerly served in Cromwell's army, and had furthermore served the Lord Protector in some personal capacity. He wrote to Cromwell after the battle "to give to your Highness a true relation of the late disaster of this Countrey." This letter from his own man would have more weight with Cromwell than all the testimony of the Papists put together. And be sure, Cecil, Lord Baltimore, knew how to use it to the best advantage. The text of the letter appears in "Refutation of Babylon's Fall."

Chapter XIII

AFTER THE RUCKUS AT PROVIDENCE THERE WAS, AS USUAL, an interval of quiet in the Province while word of what had happened was carried to England and both sides waited in trepidation for the judgment of the Lord Protector. All the ships were accustomed to sail together for England in the spring, carrying the tobacco crop, and they did not ordinarily return until late fall or winter to fetch the next year's crop, so there was a long time to wait.

Meanwhile, the Puritan Commissioners functioning as a Council continued to meet at Mr. Preston's house, and to hold court there, but they were hardly in a position to call for a meeting of the Assembly. They have not entered a word in their book about the doings on the Severn; consequently, I can't say how long Captain Stone and his officers were held in custody, or whether the fines imposed by the Council of War were actually collected. The Commissioners' state of mind is indicated by their concern with organizing and training a force of militia. William Durand, being absent from the province, Mr. Preston served as Secretary pro tem. Durand, undoubtedly, had been sent to Virginia to report to Governor Bennett. We find Bennett at this time resigning his office, to one Edward Digges and depart-

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ing for England to plead the cause of the Puritan colonists in person.

Captain Robert Slye was made a Commissioner and put in charge of military matters, while Captain John Smith was "constuted Muster Master Generall for St. Marie's, Potomock and Putuxent." Presently the latter's style was changed to "Commander of the Military forces in Patuxent River . . . of all as shall be Nominated and Listed Soldiers of the Trayne band." Later in the summer the Commissioners, not satisfied with the progress of the militia, ordered that: "Captains of the Trayne bands of Patuxent shall require all the Inhabitants fitt to bear Armes to appeare at the Exercises." In the following spring, again concerned over the lax state of the militia, they appointed new men "to be Captaine over and Execise all the Inhabitants in the several districts." This was signed by Richard Preston.

In December in the record book appears the only bit of levity that may be laid at Mr. Preston's door. Apparently the Commissioners decided that their proceedings lacked dignity; or perhaps it was only that the Secretary, Mr. Durand (who had returned), was desirous of airing his scholarship. At any rate, the appointment of a "High Sheriffe for Putuxent etc.," is entered in Latin: "Noverint Universi per presentes" etc. For the ignorant, a translation follows. Next comes an informal entry of the deputies' acknowledgment of the High Sheriff's authority. This has been crossed out, and the same repeated in more elegant and dignified terms. Appended to this we find, along with the names of the other Commissioners: "Ri: Preston. Recordum Verum ex orriginali." Was he poking fun at the learned Secretary? No more Latin appears.

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Finally, a letter from the Lord Protector came. It is dated September 26th, 1655, and would therefore have been received in the province some time during the winter. It didn't settle anything. Cromwell merely said that the Parliament men in Virginia and Maryland had misunderstood his instructions of the previous January. Upon Lord Baltimore's formal complaint of the actions of the Parliamentary Commissioners, the dispute had been turned over to the Lords of Trade for adjudication, and the Colonists had to wait a year and a half longer for a settlement. As early as 1653, Lord Baltimore had caused his case to be printed in London. It is a masterly piece of pleading.

Meanwhile, in the summer of 1656, Baltimore appointed Josias Fendall Governor of Maryland. This was a bitter pill to the Puritans—Fendall was the man who had behaved so cavalierly at the sack of Charles' Gift, but they swallowed it. Later in the year came Philip Calvert, the Lord Proprietary's brother, to take charge of his personal affairs and be "Principall Secretary" of the Colony. After his coming, Fendall was usually styled "Lieutenant." The former Governor, William Stone, was appointed "to be of our Councill."

On February 27th, 1658, the fateful news arrived from England that Lord Baltimore's patent had been upheld and confirmed by the Lord Protector, and that an agreement between Lord Baltimore and Richard Bennett had been signed in London. This agreement had been brought about largely through the friendly endeavors of young Edward Digges, whom Bennett had left as Governor of Virginia, and who had relinquished his office to go to Bennett's assistance. Lord Baltimore was generous in his hour of triumph. He had agreed to

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leave all offenses to be determined by the Protector of England and his Council, and this meant that a general amnesty to all could now be proclaimed. Lord Baltimore further agreed never to repeal his law of 1649, under which religious freedom was granted "to all persons professing to beleieve in Jesus Christ." How the wise and patient Cecil must have smiled behind his hand when the Puritans demanded religious freedom!

"Upon reading of which," states the record, "the Lieutenant, Josias Fendall imediatly despatched letters to Capt. William Fuller, and Mr. Richard Preston &c. desireing them to give him, Mr. Secretary and Captaine Thomas Cornwaleys a meeting at St. Leonard's Creek upon 18th March following . . ."

Upon receipt of this letter, what anxious and gloomy conferences must have taken place in Mr. Preston's house! When there is no way out, the talk is long; it travels in futile circles; tempers wear thin. The conciliatory Mr. Preston's hardest task would be to bring fiery Captain Fuller, the soldier, to reason. It was particularly painful to them to have to deal with Fendall, who had injured and insulted the Prestons. Moreover, he was a false and fractious man; it was not long before he betrayed Cecil Calvert and, after having been pardoned, in later years still more foully betrayed Charles Calvert, Cecil's son. That the Commissioners could not decide on how to act, is indicated by the fact that they failed to keep the appointment on March 18th. The record states: "Wind and weather not permitting Cap: Fuller and the rest to com," the meeting was postponed for two days. This sounds fishy, because the Fendall party had managed to come all the way from St. Mary's City, whereas Preston's own place abutted

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on St. Leonard's Creek and Fuller lived only a couple of miles away.

They all turned up on the 20th, which was a Saturday, but "the day being farre spent and Sunday not fitt to treat of businesse," the meeting was again postponed. Thus the Puritan Commissioners gained two days more, but it is not likely it did them any good. Finally, on the 22nd, the business was opened. This appears to have been an open air meeting, and if so was certainly held on the shore of the pretty bay just within the mouth of St. Leonard's, a natural landing place with deep water right up to the beach. John Hack's store and post office stood here for many years; also, we have held many an oyster roast on the spot where the Cavaliers and the Puritans gathered in their long-skirted coats to settle the government of the province.

In Baltimore's name, Fendall demanded the resignations of the entire Puritan government, and that the records and the "Greate Seale" be turned over to him. The record fails to state if he received the seal. According to tradition, the Puritans had buried it at Charles' Gift, and claimed to have lost it. At intervals during our tenancy, one or another of the Footner children has set about digging for it, but if it was buried at Charles' Gift it is there still.

Lord Baltimore's instructions to Fendall and his Councilors run to four pages of print. It is only necessary to say that they exhibit his usual mixture of prudence and generosity, and make dry reading. After a study of his conditions, the Puritan Commissioners asked for a modification of the oath of fidelity which had caused so much trouble, and it seems to have been granted them. This page of the ancient record is badly damaged.

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Thereafter, apparently, the oath was not imposed on the planters who were already settled in the country, but only on newcomers.

Having been agreed upon, "the Articles were read faire engrossed in parchment to the Commissioners, and afterwards signed by the Governour and Secretary and delivered to the Commissioners." This precious document may have been among those discovered by John Hack in the cuddy at Charles' Gift, and used to start the fire of a cold morning.

However painful this meeting for the Puritan Commissioners, it resulted in a real and lasting peace for Maryland. Richard Preston lived to enjoy it for eleven years longer and Lord Baltimore for sixteen. A meeting of the General Assembly was immediately called, and it came together a month later "at St. Leonard's in Mr. Thomas Gerrard's house." This is a puzzling reference, because Gerrard lived at St. Clement's across the river; but, of course, he may have had land on our side, too. The record does not state if Mr. Preston came to this assembly.

Preston must have got credit from both sides as a result of the settlement. The unstable Governor Fendall presently fell out with Gerrard, of his Council, and amongst other things accused him of having "betrayed the private debates of Councill that at Mr. Robert Slye's house in May (1658) . . . it was at the Councill resolved to make Mr. Richard Preston one of his Lordship's Councillors." For some reason Mr. Preston did not get the job; probably Fendall himself spiked his chances, for there is no hatred so enduring as that of the man who has injured you.

Probably Preston was glad of it, for he was now free

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to put a long-cherished dream into effect. He was elected to the session of the General Assembly which met at Mr. Thomas Gerrard's and Mr. Robert Slye's in February, 1660, but was reported as having "gon for England." One can be sure that he had a good time. However sober the man, he must have warmed to the amenities of the old country after twenty-five years in the wilderness, the London crowds, the lively shows, old friends. He would see the triumphal restoration of Charles II in May of this year with mixed feelings; however, the great Cromwell was dead, and it was Cromwell's own General Monk who brought Charles back. England had peace, too.

Governor Fendall took advantage of the astute Mr. Preston's absence to stage a little rebellion of his own. He adroitly flattered the Burgesses of 1660 by declaring that they "constituted a lawful assembly without dependance on any other power in the Province," and made believe to yield up the prerogatives of his office under Lord Baltimore's patent. His object was to create an infant Commonwealth in Maryland with himself for Lord Protector. Secretary Philip Calvert, a well-meaning man but weak, saw through Fendall's scheme, spoke his mind and walked out on the show. For a while confusion reigned again; but when Lord Baltimore's letter arrived deposing Fendall, it was accompanied by a royal proclamation. The new king adjured all his loyal subjects to re-establish in full "the rights and jurisdiction of Lord Baltimore," whereupon Fendall's one-ring circus folded. He ran away, was captured, made a whining plea of sickness, and was contemptuously released upon giving bond for good behavior. He lived to make more and worse trouble. Philip Calvert became Governor for

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a short while, giving place to his nephew, Charles Calvert, the Lord Proprietary's son and heir.

Deprived of his friend's sage and calming counsel, Captain Fuller also got into trouble while Mr. Preston was away. Just what it was is not clear, but in spite of the general amnesty, we find Governor Calvert in 1660 proclaiming William Fuller "that Jncendiary and seditious person an outlaw, who doth privatly lurk and Obscure himselfe in Unknown places," and ordering that he be apprehended.

In 1661, Mr. Preston, having come back, was returned to the Assembly of that year as a member from Calvert County. Evidently they were glad to see him, for he was promptly elected Speaker for the year. He served at every session thereafter; 1662, 1664, 1666. After 1666 the record of the Assembly is lost for a while, but in 1669 he turns up as one of the first representatives of the newly erected Dorchester County over on the Eastern Shore. He was a large landholder there. He had evidently taken advantage of the peaceful years to apply himself to improving his estate, because he had become a wealthy man for those days.

This is what our old friend, the exuberant George Alsop, has to say about those quiet and prosperous years:

He that desires to see the real platform of a quiet and sober government extant, Superiority with a meek and yet commanding power sitting at the Helme, steering the actions of State quietly, through the multitude and diversity of Opinionous waves that diversly meet, let him look on Mary-Land with eyes admiring, and he'll then judge her The Miracle of this Age.

Mr. Preston was not so happy in his family life as in his estate. His wife pre-deceased him, by how long, no

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one can tell now because the vital statistics of Calvert County have burned up on two occasions, and women customarily did not leave wills. There is no word anywhere about that meek woman except that her name was Margaret. The first-born, Richard, Junior, who meant so much to a great landed proprietor, died in 1669 only a few months before his father. The event may well have hastened the elder Richard's end. His son, Samuel, had died young and his remaining son, James, was out of the country. Another Samuel, a four-year-old boy, Richard Junior's son, was the heir. The exact date of Richard Senior's death is unknown; his will was drawn in September, 1669, and probated in January following. It is evident from its language that the testator knew he was on his deathbed. He was only fifty-five years old.

Chapter XIV

THE WILL IS ON FILE IN THE RECORD OFFICE AT ANNAPOLIS. I have held it in my hands, and it brought my ancient predecessor close to me. The imprint of his seal is clear in the red wax; a plain circlet containing the Roman capitals R. P. Only the shaky signature is in the testator's own hand. The language of the instrument reveals that it was dictated. In his anxiety to make his wishes clear, he has so overlaid and overlapped it in prolixity that it is tedious to read. Yet it did not occur to him that since it is written on two separate sheets of paper the transcriber, had he wished, could have rewritten the first sheet to suit himself and nobody the wiser.

The handwriting is businesslike and legible; it is carefully paragraphed; the spelling is almost modern. Some of the paper has mouldered away and the contents are lost, but the document has now been fixed, like Leonardo's Last Supper, so that what remains will last forever. Luckily for me, before the original began to disintegrate it was entered in a large fair hand in the register of wills, and from that copy I drew my information. It was amusing to discover that the transcriber made more than a few mistakes. His spelling and his taste in capital letters is all his own. He had a special

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fondness for the capital C and let no opportunity pass to flourish it. Among the wills offered for probate from the first founding of Maryland, Richard Preston's is number sixty-four.

This sixteenth day of the seventh month called Sept. 1669 I, Richard Preston of Patuxent in Maryland being indifferently in health and in perfect Mind Do make this my Last Will and Testament in manner and form as followeth, viz:

I omit the pious Quaker's profession of faith because it is very long and, after all, has a conventional ring. It was simply the thing to say when you started to make your will. He goes on:

And for what is really and personally (after my Just Debts to all men are satisfied) any Manner of Wayes Justly belonging to me I do will and bequeath as followeth:

Impe. I bequeath, Will and freely Give unto my sonn James Preston (if he be now living or shall live to come again to Maryland) the whole and sole use of this Plantation in Patuxent River where I now live until my Grandchild, Samuel Preston, shall live and attaine to the age of twenty-one years, at which time my will is, that he the said Samuel if so long he do live, (shall) peaceably and quietly have, hold and Injoy the Plantation Land and Housing with other appurtenances at that time thereunto belonging, to him and to his Heires for Ever. . . .

The sad and bitter reference in the foregoing leads one at first to suspect that James had run away from home, but upon reading to the end one learns that James had gone to England the previous year with his father's knowledge. It was merely the dreadful risks of crossing in those days that made the father doubt he

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might never return. The testator continues (with small regard to punctuation):

Also my will is that there be tenn cowes and one bull appointed and marked for the use of the said Plantaion and also four breeding Soves and four servants with a green Curtain feather bed in my Lodging Room and furniture (for the bed) with some pewter and brass, an Iron Pott and the like as my Overseers (Executors) shall judge convenient. . . .

And in the meantime my will is that the Said Samuel have a sufficient Maintenance during his minority for ffood, raiment and Educacion in Learning, the charge thereof to be defrayed out of the benefit (profit) . . . from the said Plantaion.

With elaborate circumlocutions, the testator goes on to provide that if little Samuel's mother was to have the ordering of him, she was to get the cows, sows, servants and furniture. The Neglect (two hundred acres of land adjoining Preston on the south) was to go with the rest. James was to have Barren Island on the Eastern Shore if he lived to claim it. This is the land one sees in clear weather upon looking out through the mouth of the Patuxent. Notwithstanding its name, it was a valuable property. It is now about 300 acres in extent and in Preston's time was probably twice as big. In the event of James' death it was to go with the rest.

The unmarried daughters, Sarah and Rebecca Preston, were to have "my land in Great Choptanke (River) lately purchased from Walter Dunch, called 'Horne,' 600 acres . . . to be equally divided by Lott." If either died the other was to inherit her share; if both died, James was to get it, and if James died, "my kinsmen,

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James and John Dorsey." This parcel as well as the following were both on the Eastern Shore.

Five hundred acres at the head of Little Choptanke (one-third I have already given to my kinsman, Ralph Dorsey), the other two-thirds to go to John Dorsey. . . . And having a Covenant with William Fick a Dutchman and liver in Little Choptank relating to the delivery of some cattell . . . my will is that the said Ralph Dorsey have . . . all the cattell . . . belonging to me by virtue or power of said Covenant.

Mr. Preston next considers his servants. Edward Norman, an overseer, was to get his wages above what he owed his master, but he is "to discompt his bill" out of his wages. Thomas Brock was to be paid his full wages "notwithstanding what he owes." The will adds: "His wages is 1200 lbs of tobacco and one good Milch cowe." William Purnell, an indented servant, was to be freed "the twentieth of December next" and was to receive "a cowe, an Iron Pott, two hilling and two weeding hoes, two felling axes, 3000 six penny nails and 200 of twenty penny nails, with a flock or wooll bed or canvas and wooll to make him one; with a rugg and a blankett, Cloathes with Shoes Sufficient for one year, three barreles of corne and one breeding sowe." It was the law of the province that an indented servant should be outfitted in this manner when he was freed.

To John Dorsey (one of the kinsmen) goods to the value of twenty pounds. "Such goods as he shall think most Usefull to him either out of the goods in the house all ready or that may be sent in this year out of England."

To George Hawes twenty pounds. "The said twenty pounds is due to him by promise when he went with

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my son James for England." (Possibly Hawes was the Captain of the ship which took James.)

To his three Berry grandchildren, five thousand pounds of tobacco; "some plate which is this year to come from England to the value of tenn pounds sterling," also ten ewes and one ram.

To James Dorsey 5000 lbs. tobacco "out of the tobacco debts" (i.e., the tobacco that was owing to the testator) "and that at the 15th December next he be free for himself." The "overseers" of the will were further instructed to furnish James Dorsey "with goods to the value of tenn pounds and other necessities."

To his daughter-in-law, Margaret Preston, (little Samuel's mother) goods added to what she had already received to the value of twenty-seven pounds to make up two hundred pounds in all. He then specifies:

Tenn Hhds of this year's Sweet Scented Cropp of tobacco, weighing 5000 lbs which are to be valued at 100 pounds sterl. and a copper kettle in the store loft at two pounds twelve shillings, the bed she used to lie on with the bed head and other furniture at fourteen pounds, and I do appoint and ordain that my said daughter-in-law shall have forty-five pounds more in Such goods as is in or about the house or that shall be sent to me out of England this year. . . . And my will is that she shall have plate (if any come unto me this year) to the value of five pounds sterl.

(There was always a big chance that the ordered goods might never come.)

To his son James:

Halfe the money which I have sent for by James Canneday if my said son be living in England. If he be dead halfe to be divided among the overseers of this my will, the

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other halfe to friends (Quakers) in the ministry to be disposed of according to the discretion of my overseers.

To Thomas Preston upon the Clifts what tobacco he owes to me. (Nobody so far has been able to establish what relation this Thomas was to Richard, if any.) To Isaac Hunt goods useful to him to the value of five pounds. . . . To William Harper what is due to me from him by bill.

And for the remainder of my estate movable and immovable (Provided always that the overseers of this my will satisfy themselves from time to time for their care and trouble in and about the premises) I freely give unto the three children James, Rebecca and Sarah Preston . . . equally to be divided among them.

He appointed William Berry, Peter Sharpe, Thomas Taylor of Kent, and John Meares "upon the Clifts" to be his overseers or executors. Berry was the husband of Preston's daughter who had died. He subsequently married Margaret Preston, Richard Junior's widow. The will closes with a long and anxious exhortation to his overseers to settle these matters amicably. If they found themselves unable to agree they were to seek "advice and assistance of such friends (Quakers) or others whom they shall think fitt." The overseers were given broad powers. "I say what they shall conclude of my very will is that it stand good and Effectual in Law to all intents and Purposes as if I myself were living to order and determine the same."

The will is witnessed by Enoch Coomes, George Douolino (this signature is anybody's guess), Thomas Peake and William Jones. Two months later on the "2nd Xember" (December was the tenth month under the old style), Mr. Preston opens his will to add a "post-script." Somebody has pointed out to him that he has

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not provided for the disposal of his estate in the event of Samuel's death before reaching his majority. Mr. Preston ordains that "the plantaion shall fall to Samuel's next of kin."

On the same date he also adds a "memorandum" that the bequest of goods to John Dorsey is to be considered null and void. Perhaps by this time Dorsey had received the goods, or Mr. Preston may have decided that he had done enough for him without the goods. Scarcely more than a month after these codicils were added, the will was offered for probate.

Mr. Preston was undoubtedly buried in the little family graveyard which still survives in our river field, a hundred yards to the right of the house as you face the water. Only two or three of the latest gravestones were in place when we came, and these were torn up and smashed in the fall of the great mulberry tree which shaded them. Earlier stones had been pulled up by old Dennis Dixon, the agnostic and scoffer, who to the great scandal of the neighborhood, used them to make a path from his door to his gate. They were worn perfectly smooth when I saw them. One of them may have marked the grave of Richard Preston. They finally disappeared when the yard was plowed during my retirement from the firm.

Not much remains to be told about the Prestons at Charles' Gift. The absent James returned safely and took up the management of the home place. He built himself a house at "Preston's Neck," which was that part of the land adjacent to St. Leonard's Creek. It was a wooden house. However wild he may have been, after his return he was a devout Quaker, and notable among the Friends. The great preacher, George Fox, on arriving in America, went direct to James Preston's

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house, and made it his headquarters whenever he was in the vicinity.

George Fox says in his *Journal* under date of August 28th, 1672:

A large and very precious meeting at Peter Sharpe's (one of Richard Preston's executors) on the Clifts. Some papists were at this meeting one of whom threatened before he came to dispute with me, but he was reached, and could not oppose. After the meeting we went about 18 miles to James Preston's, a friend who lived on Patuxent River. Thither came an Indian king with his brother to whom I spoke, and I found they understood the thing I spoke of.

It was Fox's second visit at James Preston's house. Following this, he made a long and arduous journey to the Carolinas, and was back again at Preston's Neck in November.

About the first hour in the morning we reached James Preston's. . . . We were very weary; yet the next day being the first of the week we went to an Indian King's cabin where several Indians were, with whom we had a pretty opportunity to discourse, and they carried themselves very lovingly. . . . After this the cold grew so exceeding sharp, such extreme frost and snowy weather beyond what was usual in that country, that we could hardly endure to be in it. . . . The twenty-seventh of the eleventh month we had a very precious meeting in a tobacco house (Barn?). The next day we returned to James Preston's. . . . When we came there we found his house was burned down to the ground the night before through the carelessness of a maid-servant; so we lay three nights on the ground by the fire, the weather being very cold.

The brevity of this account is staggering. Poor James was uninsured.

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The Fox party experienced wild Maryland weather in that winter of 1672. The journal goes on:

We made an observation which was somewhat strange but certainly true; that one day in the midst of this cold weather, the wind turning into the South it grew so hot that we could hardly bear the heat; and the next day and night the wind chopping back into the North, we can hardly endure the cold.

This is a poetic characterization of our November weather, but a mite exaggerated, I would say. After twenty-five Novembers, the nearest I can come to matching the good Friend's story is to tell of an afternoon in November, 1921, when the family set off for Solomon's Island rejoicing in a temperature of 55° by the thermometer on the back porch. Four hours later, as they returned weeping and congealed, it stood at 20°. The north wind had come chopping down the river indeed.

James died in the following year, 1673. He left no sons, but only a daughter, so the little boy Samuel was the only male representative of the line. There is no record of who looked after his estate until he grew up; it was probably his mother, and her second husband, William Berry. When he reached man's estate, like Dick Whittington, he went to Philadelphia and became Mayor of the city (in 1711). Blood will tell!

Samuel Preston pulled up stakes in 1693, being then twenty-eight years old. During the previous year the temporal power of the Lords Baltimore had been overthrown in Maryland, and the principle of religious freedom with it. The Anglican Church was imposed on the province, and it was natural that the Quaker should seek the more sympathetic atmosphere of Pennsylvania. Sam-

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uel settled first in Sussex County (now a part of Delaware) and was elected Sheriff the following year and member of the Pennsylvania Assembly in 1701. In 1703 he moved to Philadelphia; was admitted Freeman of the city in 1707, and made Alderman the same year. Through his marriage to Rachel Lloyd he had become one of Philadelphia's inner circle, and in 1708 we find one of his powerful kinsmen writing: "Sam Preston is a very good man and now makes a figure. It is time that something was done for Rachel's husband."

He became a member of the Provincial Council in 1709 and Mayor in 1711. His principal accomplishments as Mayor seem to have been the purchase of buckets for the first fire department, and the establishment of a "bettering" house, or reformatory. He was an intimate friend of William Penn, the founder, and a trustee under Penn's will. In 1714 he became Provincial Treasurer, an office he held until his death in 1743. How like his grandfather! Samuel had no sons and Richard's line ended with him.

There is no record of Richard Preston's having sported a coat of arms in Maryland. The arms of grandson Samuel are thus described: "Argent, three unicorns, heads erased, sable. Crest: out of a ducal coronet, a unicorn's head proper. Motto: *Praesto ut Praestem*."

After the departure of the Prestons the history of the old house falls into obscurity. The land records of Calvert County were burned up along with the vital statistics; one gets a glimpse from an old letter, a deed or a will preserved among family papers, and that is all. By an entry in Lord Baltimore's rent rolls which were closed in 1723, I see that on that date "Preston" was in the possession of Alexander Parran and Nathan-

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iel Ashcomb. The Ashcombs were a great family in the neighborhood; they owned Point Patience. This Nathaniel was married to Mary Parran, and the two owners were probably brothers-in-law.

There is no further mention of an Ashcomb; Alexander was apparently succeeded by a Moses Parran; he by Young Parran and he by his son, Captain Richard Parran, who is described as "a great patriot during the revolution." Captain Richard left no sons and upon his death in 1795, the property was divided amongst his three "co-heiresses" (presumably his daughters). Another Mary Parran took "the old house" and one hundred acres of land for her share. This is the property that I bought. She was a minor at the time of her father's death, and her guardian was John Gantt. I assume that she married her guardian (or one of his sons), because for the next fifty years the old house is found to be in the possession of the Gantt family. We found the name Gantt carved in one of the old doors.

The Gantts were a good county family who have petered out with shocking completeness. When I came to Charles' Gift in 1912, four brothers of the name were living here and there close by, farmers in a small way, or fishermen. Their father had been born in the old house. One after another of the brothers died until only Warren, the youngest, was left. This Warren Gantt, a bachelor, was a queer, half-mad creature, a mumbling braggart, who was fond of displaying a great roll of bills on all occasions. He didn't have to work, he told the world. He was not popular.

He built himself a neat bungalow at the turn of the road, and after it was finished, decided that it was too nice to be messed up, so continued for many years to

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live in a tiny windowless outhouse alongside, while the bungalow stood, and still stands, empty. Young Mark Ludwell says that he never passed that outhouse at night but he wasn't tempted to hitch a line to it and pull it over. However, it was never done; as long as he lived in our simple neighborhood, Warren Gantt, though well-hated, was not molested.

In the spring of 1938 he bought a small farm further up the county and went up there to work it. He also owned a small concession at Seaside Park, our shore resort, and one Saturday in July he was paid his annual rent for it, \$1000. He drove about from bar to bar, exhibiting his roll and it was not long before he picked up a young fellow and two girls. During the rest of Saturday and on Sunday the quartette was seen in Gantt's car in various places around the county. On Monday morning Gantt's body was found in the yard of his farmhouse with five bullet holes in it. His three companions were presently apprehended in Virginia. The youth was twenty-three and each of the girls eighteen. After all, they did not get the roll because that was subsequently found in a paper bag in Gantt's barn where he had hidden it. Such is the darker side of Calvert, which, of course, is neither better nor worse than other counties. The young man was sent up for life and both the girls received long terms.

In the middle of the last century the old house and its hundred acres were purchased by one Dennis Dixon, a widower who came here to live with a brother and five small children, a boy and four girls. This was a disastrous tenancy; my information is derived from the gossip of the old folks in the neighborhood. The little boy died and his father became a misanthrope and a

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scoffer at religion. Years after, the brother was found lying in the road one morning with his face in a puddle, drowned.

The little girls grew into young women so handsome that their fame spread far and wide, but so terrible was their father, that the young men who came to see them were forced to climb a rope let down from one of the dormer windows. Father slept downstairs. One of the young men who climbed that rope is still pointed out to me; he is near ninety, and you would never believe that he had been capable of it. One after another, they say, the girls went down the rope and eloped, leaving the sour old man alone.

He lived on for many unhappy years. A tall, handsome man of aristocratic bearing, they tell me, who managed to keep a good horse until almost the end. In other respects he grew poorer and poorer; his farm fell into neglect; year after year, John Hack told me, he "put all his richness" on the same patch behind the house where he raised a little tobacco. This, by the way, is why my trees on that side have made such an extraordinary growth. He was polite to all, but rejected any overtures of friendship. Every now and then one of the good women of the neighborhood would drive down to see the lonely old man, bearing a pudding in one hand and a Bible in the other. He accepted the pudding and rejected the Bible. "Why should I pray to the God," he asked, "who let my son die?" He died alone in 1900 and the county seized the place for unpaid taxes. John Hack bought it in at the subsequent sale.

Chapter XV

I NOW IN (1916) HAD A HOUSE OF MY OWN, AND A WIFE to put in it. Of course, I did not realize at the time what marriage was doing to me any more than the old house knew what was going to happen to it when the Footners entered into possession. Old photographs are almost unrecognizable; but for all that there is something in house (and man) which remains fixed through outward and visible changes. At two years old, which is as far back as I can remember, I was the same me. As for the house, the quiet Puritan had a particular feeling when he visualized it that I am sharing when I look around the great room today. I envy him because he created the house, whereas I only moved in. It is for this incommunicable something that we love his house, now ours; it is itself and like no other.

On this foundation the associations of more than twenty years have been built. Happy and painful associations; one as binding as the other. Some impressions for no reason remain clearer than clear, while many more, forgotten, nevertheless added to the reservoir of feeling before they faded. One looked out of a certain window and saw somebody coming; in a room full of huge shadows one sat with another before a leaping fire and said nothing; one stood on the old wooden

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porch with a hand on the doorknob facing despair—and discovered that despair could be faced. A honeymoon was spent in the house, and upstairs and down there are innumerable spots hallowed by delight.

I wish I could say that our babies were born under the low eaves; they ought to have been; but hygienic considerations forbade. However, they were brought home as soon as their mother could be moved. How sharply etched is the picture of the first miracle offspring being bathed on cold spring mornings in a collapsible rubber tub before the big fireplace! Or sitting on a fat cushion in an open doorway, gravely inspecting the excavation for the new wing. Or, a little later, running endlessly from one end of the big room to the other. That baby never had time to walk. And the terrible moment when mother and father saw that the unconscious baby was running with a limp. Luckily it was only scurvy, due to wrong feeding; orange juice and spinach made all right again. I hope I may be permitted to die in the old house. However, I shall have to bestir myself to get my room fixed up and painted. It is in no state at present to make the setting for a good end.

I have already told how at this time we had a shed kitchen affixed to the south end of the house. We ate in one-half of the big room and sat in the other. The arrangement had its disadvantages. Hungry guests used to watch the preparations for dinner with an eagerness that became embarrassing if the meal was unduly delayed; and Tilly, our little blue-eyed darky when, setting the table would become so engrossed in the conversation at the other end of the room as to fall in a trance. Once when she was bringing in the dinner she turned

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her head to hear better, caught her foot in a rug and the dinner went on the floor. Tilly was fired, but she turned up again later. She was indispensable because at ten years old she learned quicker than her pure-blooded black sisters at twenty.

At the sitting end of the room the stairway was more picturesque than practicable. Eight neat steps with six inch risers led to a doorway. Within the doorway the stair turned on itself and went completely haywire, for the risers were all of different heights, and even so the builder did not come out right, having thirteen inches left at the top that you had to negotiate at one stretch. And this while going round in a semicircle. One of the reasons for building the wing was to provide a stairway that babies could be carried up and down without risking a catastrophe.

Upstairs, no changes had been made except that the end bedroom was enlarged to take in the hall, and modernized with bristol board panels on the walls. This is my room; the panels are still there, and I dislike them. Whenever the temperature out of doors rises above 85° they give notification by smelling of fish glue. Another dislike is the *l'art moderne* fireplace that my former partner chiseled out of the big chimney. Not only does it damp the draft of the fireplace below, but it lets rain in, and anyhow it is not safe to build a fire in it, because the hearth was laid directly on the boards of the floor. Since it is solidly wrought of cement, I don't see what I can do about it, short of using dynamite.

The other two little bedrooms still showed the original roughly troweled plaster. This, we discovered, was slapped on hand-riven laths fastened with hand-wrought nails. What a different world it was when laths and

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nails were made by hand! To the walls of these rooms were nailed wooden strips with quaint wooden pegs doweled in for hanging clothes. Of the beautiful old doors, only one remained, the others, no doubt, having been sold for a song to a cruising antique dealer. Each room had its little peaked dormer looking to the river, the window being held open by a stick. On the other side of the house, for some reason, the two dormers held windows of normal size. These were really of better design, for the angle of the dormer repeated the angle of the roof. The roof was discovered to be a right angle, though seen from the ground you would swear it was more acute. The room at the head of the stairs had a tiny closet tucked between chimney and wall, and in the wall of the closet was a removable panel by which you might enter the mysterious cuddy on hands and knees.

From the beginning it was obvious that we had to have more room, and all through 1916 I was busy covering sheets of yellow paper with plans, though there was no money to build with. If there is an occupation more absorbing than planning a house to live in, I have not found it. My grandfather Footner was an architect, and that would have been my choice of a profession, had not the required education been so long and expensive. All my early fantasies were concerned with planning houses, and at last I had the prospect of building one.

At first we visualized an extension lengthwise, with, eventually, a smaller replica of the main block attached to each end. This was a favorite plan in Maryland in the late seventeenth century; but as I thought it over, difficulties presented themselves one after another. I

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doubted if we could make it look seventeenth century; also, the price of brick was prohibitive, taking into account the long haul; and finally, the interior arrangement could not be otherwise than inconvenient. So we settled on a T-shaped plan. This left the front façade of the old house unchanged; the addition could be built of wood without any glaring incongruity, and the rooms fell into place of themselves. The back door of the old house became the communicating door with the addition, and the necessity of cutting through an eighteen-inch brick wall was avoided.

While the house waited on the money for building, we busied ourselves with the yard. The first task was to grade for a lawn. Day after day, with an old horse and a scraper with a hole in it, we scraped and dumped and raked and scraped again, all to no purpose, for as soon as we filled one hollow, another developed elsewhere. Finally I called a halt, and all rolling and billowy as it was, we raked the yard for the last time and sowed our seed. The billowy effect is still there, but I like it; a billiard-table lawn would have been out of keeping with the old plantation house. By degrees as I worked, my aim became clear to me. One must strive for a rustic effect and eschew the suburban.

Then the planting. I had never done any planting and I made some sad mistakes; luckily, Nature repaired the worst of them, as she has a way of doing. The keynote was to be furnished by a pair of American elms to enframe the front of the house. There was already a weeping willow nearby which had been stuck in at random the year before, and, being still in the switchy stage, had taken no hurt from the tornado. It was decided to let it remain until such time as it should crowd

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the elm alongside. The willow grew like a beautiful weed; it has been crowding the elm for some years now; perhaps it would improve the composition to cut it down, but I shall never do so. Torn by a score of gales and broken by the weight of sleet in winter—willows are dangerously brittle—it has assumed a fantastic, Japanesque habit deeply satisfying to the eye.

Outside each elm I planted a locust, our fastest-growing tree, for the sake of the shade they would afford while the deliberate elms were maturing. The native locust is very beautiful when young, but becomes slatternly in early middle life, and these were to have been cut down when the elms asserted themselves. As a matter of fact, the elms, planted in old Dennis Dixon's "richness," outgrew the locusts and all four trees are still there. The locust on the left, as you face the house, came off second best, when young, in a brush with a pair of mules and a wagon, and has had a drunken cant to the sou'-east ever since. It could be spared now, but one of its branches, in collaboration with a branch of apple from the other side of the fence, makes an arch over the road to the beach which melts my heart when I am considering the axe. The locust on the right was split by a gale once, which neatly lay out both halves on the grass. We gathered them up, bolted them together in conjugal embrace; and now the tree, having covered the bolts, has become one again.

So much for the front, or river side; no serious flaw has developed in this plan. On the south side, I planted a row of poplars (cottonwoods), and I am happy to say they all died, for I have come to look on the cottonwood as a vulgar tree without a redeeming feature ex-

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cept the dubious one of growing fast. In their place I planted a tulip tree on one side and, leaving a good stretch of grass between, a linden tree on the other. Also, on this side is a Norway spruce which I planted here, I don't know why, because it is out of the composition. But it has grown so rich and thick and shapely I can't cut it down either. It's the perennial Christmas tree; once it was the height of my wife, but now you would have to stand six little wives on top of each other to measure it. The tulip is the most magnificent of our native trees. The specimen I put out died down to the root, but eventually put out a leaf no bigger than a finger nail and from that it has grown as high as the house, a superb baby giant. The vigor suggested by its mass of leaves is terrific. The tulip belongs to a younger world than ours; one finds the imprint of its clumsy leaf in the coal seams. I have seen specimens well over a hundred feet high. I bequeath the shade of this tree to those who succeed me at Charles' Gift.

Along the back fence (the east side), I planted a row of locusts, of which all but two died and a good thing, too, because as my taste in planting improved, I began to dislike anything planted in spaced rows. Near the end of this fence I now have a flourishing young black oak, and another at our present entrance gate. There won't be room for all these monarchs when they grow up, but somebody else will have to take the responsibility of felling them. Flanking the original entrance gate (now our back gate), I planted two sycamores which I would rate as our number two tree for beauty and character. One died and the other is fulfilling itself nobly. In place of the dead one, I put in a nameless sapling presented to me as a bonus by the nursery. It

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has turned out to be a black alder and something will have to be done about it, as it threatens to take the place. It has grown as much as three feet in a single favorable year.

On the north side not much planting was required. A locust volunteered opposite the kitchen door and we gave it its head. It grew like Jack's beanstalk. I'll quote no dimensions because I should not be believed. It outgrew its strength; the winds split it four ways, and though we bolted it together as well as we could, as it grew ever heavier it threatened to pull the nuts right through the wood. Standing so close to the house, it constituted a real danger, and finally this year it was cut down. It was the first of our family of trees to go, and I grieve for it still.

On this side, the north, stands the incredible pear tree. Years ago I was worried by a small hole in the bole which I took to be the beginning of the end, and I planted three evergreens to the northwest of the house to make a windbreak when the pear should be gone. Of the three, one is a Lawson's cypress, perfect in contour and color, but the other two, scrawny hemlock spruces, have little to recommend them. They must and shall be felled.

After all, when there was occasion to have the tree surgeons down, after taking borings of the old pear, they told me it would outlive my grandchildren. Behind the pear and the evergreens lies the orchard, which my partner set out years ago. For some reason he planted only summer varieties and I have been adding winter apples that are now coming into full bearing. I put out two alleged York Imperials and waited eight years for fruit. On the ninth year they produced a bushel or so

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of yellow crabs no bigger than cherries, and the joke was on me.

Such was the main scheme of the planting. It was not all done at once, of course. There is a nursery over in Prince George's County which for several years used to go bankrupt and after reorganization, go bankrupt again. Each bankruptcy was signalized by a special sale of stock, and these were my opportunities. We made a day-long picnic of each trip. I tramped over the plantation with Tobe, the foreman, an ancient negro of mottled hue, with hands trained to a wonderful delicacy in separating and spreading roots. Tobe was a *vade mecum* of the art of planting, but he had no notion of what his nurslings were going to be like when they grew up. For one who has shopped for trees and shrubs accompanied by a salesman with a spade, mail order catalogues have little pull. On the day following these excursions, Mr. Ed would come over to help me, and within twenty-four hours of having been drawn from the earth, my purchases would be returned to it.

In the fall of 1916 the Footners had a play produced unexpectedly. One of the reviewers called it the worst play of the year; nevertheless, it ran to paying business throughout the season, and would have lasted on the road for another season had not the star quarreled with her manager and departed for Hollywood. The weekly royalty checks were the welcomest things imaginable. Somehow the money went out as fast as it came in, but in the spring the picture rights of the play were sold for a modest figure, and our share of it provided an actual fund for building. We hastened home with the baby to get to work.

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I was to be my own architect, naturally; it provided the chance of a lifetime; and Mr. Ed was clerk of the works. Mr. Ed and son Jake were to do the carpentering; Mr. Gussie, Mr. Ed's brother, would lay brick; Harry Trueman would excavate and build the cement foundation; and Claude Coppage from up county would do the plumbing. This was all in accordance with neighborhood custom. It never occurred to us to import labor from the city. Such men would have cost three times as much, and it would have spoiled our fun in building to have strangers on the job. Mr. Ed proposed charging me a dollar and a half a day for his services, but I forced him to take double that. We quarreled throughout over his wages; it reproached me to pay so little; and it reproached him to take so much. I am aware that this sounds fantastic, but so it was.

My first task was to make a set of drawings to scale. I have them still. An honest-to-God architect would smile at the labored plats, especially at my "perspectives," but they served well enough. Mr. Ed would not have been able to interpret the complicated detail of a professional draughtsman. Nor were we the slaves of our plan; if either of us had a good idea it could be changed on the spot. With such a good workman, my task was simplified. I was theory and Mr. Ed practice. Not only had he built a score of houses in his time, but he was a storehouse of the local traditions of building, and out of his knowledge of ancient houses he made valuable contributions to the design.

The first principle I laid down was that everything must be copied, so far as possible, from the existing house; height, width, pitch of the roof; chimneys, dormers, even porch posts. This resulted in some awkward

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errors, as when Mr. Ed, always literal, ordered four by six sleepers twenty-one feet six inches in length from the local sawmill. Such was the size of the sleepers in the old house, but they are of yellow locust, an exceedingly light, strong wood that is no longer obtainable. After nearly three hundred years the old beams stretch across the big room as true as the day they were laid. But when we put up our pine four by sixes they sagged of their own weight like bows. However, Mr. Ed was equal to the emergency. He jacked them up in the middle, and with ingenious bracing made them stay level.

I don't think I was ever so happy as during the building of my house. The job brings into play some of the same faculties that are used in composing a story, but with less waste of the spirit. When it's a house, you know where you are; there it stands and there can be no argument; whereas a story may convey something different to each new reader. And how thrilling in the end to enter the house you have built; to open the door and hear the solid sound of its closing—a real door! To run up the windows; to listen to the rain beating vainly on the roof; to sit in quiet while the wind howls around the well-braced corners.

On the other hand, when your story doesn't come out right, it can be changed with a stroke of the pen, but when you err in your house, there it has to stay, mocking you, while the house endures. The floor of the addition came out one inch lower than the existing floor, and our guests make a little stagger and a run when they come out of the big room into the hall.

Trueman, who was the nearest thing to a professional contractor that the county afforded (and correspondingly high), brought a gang of men and teams and the cellar

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was scooped out in no time. The question was, as always, what to do with the excavated clay. We spread it on the little flat at the foot of the road to the beach, where it lay for several years, a horrid eyesore. Suddenly it decided to become arable and grew a mat of honeysuckle. When the excavation was ready, Mr. Ed and Jake built the forms for the foundation walls, the cement was poured and the cellar men departed. As soon as the forms were knocked off, sills could be laid, and we began to feel that we had something.

There were vicissitudes. I had been searching for white pine weatherboarding wide enough to give my addition a colonial appearance. I found a lot of it in Baltimore and it presently came on the steamboat together with brick for the two chimneys, an additional order of cement and other things. We borrowed a scow from Fred Hampton and, bringing the stuff around to our shore, anchored off for the night. During the night the scow quietly sank and in the morning the place where it had been was bare. The cement was a total loss; the bricks we could retrieve in bathing suits, though a good many got buried in the sand and kept popping up for years afterwards; my precious ten-inch weatherboarding had gone upstream on the tide. It took us two days to recover it from all the creeks, inlets and bays between us and Broome's Island.

The very smell of a house under construction is exciting; I can still hear the rasp of the saws, the splintering of an adze, and the whang of the hammer when it strikes true. There was no speeding up on this job, but plenty of conversation. The conventional framing of a wooden house, established generations ago, was new to me; sills, posts, braces, plates, sleepers; simple

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and scientific. When the first section of floor was laid, how reassuring to hear heels ringing on it. It was my house. Within the limits of my pocketbook I could have things the way I wanted. I lowered the porch floor to the level of the lawn, and paved it with brick, because I had dreamed of a house one entered without stepping up; a low, spreading house, clinging to the earth.

It is a little incredible to see an imagined thing taking palpable form; the dreamed-of stairway with wide shallow steps and its big window framing the pear tree; the dining-room extending across the wing with windows at each end to provide a draft in summer; the little room in the corner where the children were to eat and, when they got bigger, to study their lessons. This room had its own door on the yard and back stairs just beyond to enable small fry to reach the nursery without getting under foot. On the other side, there was a pantry almost as big as a room to suggest a generous style of housekeeping like my grandmother's, and back of it a big kitchen and a shed.

Upstairs I had very reluctantly given up the octagonal guest room that was the planner's pride. Mr. Ed pointed out that if we cut off all four corners there wouldn't be much left in the middle, so we only cut off two. However, I will match my housemaid's closet and my linen closet against any professional planner, and the bathroom is a triumph. There was very little room for it at the head of the stairs, and the eave came down low, so that every cubic foot of content had to be considered. I moved the tank a foot out from the wall in order to give you sufficient headroom to sit and to rise again under the sloping ceiling. The washbasin is arranged in a cunning cater-cornered fashion; the only

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mistake I made was in ordering the tub. In my time I had suffered so much from short tubs that I got one nearly six feet long and it takes a quarter of an hour to fill it.

Windows to conform as near as possible to the old windows were ordered from a mill, together with the moldings to enframe them. Mr. Ed put in all the window sills upside down and the mistake was not discovered for several years. From the one ancient door that survived, I drew a design for all the doors in the new house, and sent it away to be executed. These cypress doors, made to order, were to be our great extravagance. The disappointment was bitter when they arrived with the design vulgarized and spoiled. Someone at the mill who could not endure such a departure from the conventional, had undertaken to improve on it. The season was growing late when they arrived and we had to have doors; they were not sent back.

A great gash had to be made in the roof of the old house in order to effect a union with the new; and we took the occasion to reroof the old house completely and to alter the windows. The steep little dormers in front were replaced with larger windows copied from those on the back. These permitted of cords and weights on the sashes, and the old sticks to hold them up were thrown away. The windows in the back roof were moved out of the way of the new structure and put in again and the floor of the second story was carried over the now useless breakneck stair. This provided my wife with a room similar to mine, having windows on three sides and cross ventilation.

The only labor trouble I had was with my amateur plumber, who had all the vices of the professional and

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none of his skill. As he came of good people in the county, he ate his midday meal with us and complained of everything that was put before him. Like the bishop in the old song, his stomach was not good. We grew to hate him poisonously; but in those days plumbing was still a novelty in Calvert, and Coppage was the only man in the county who practiced the trade. He absented himself from the job for days at a time, leaving his tools, of course, in the time-honored way of plumbers. Meanwhile, the season was getting on, and we dreaded the onset of cold weather without a bathroom or a hot water plant.

I made a good many visits to the telephone to try to run him down, and the last time I called his house a careless operator cut me in on a busy wire. I heard the plumber say to his wife: "Anything new?" Mrs. Coppage replied: "Nothing important. Footner called up again." Coppage said: "The hell with him. I can string him along for a while yet." Whereat husband and wife joined in merry laughter. I didn't say anything over the wire; I couldn't trust myself; but I sat down and wrote him a letter telling him, among other things, to come the next day and get his tools or I'd throw them out in the road. I know the letter got under his hide, because still when we meet more than twenty years after, he looks the other way in embarrassment.

To help Mr. Ed out, we had secured two additional carpenters from across the river, and through them I learned of a plumber over there, and had him on the job the following day. He was a piteous little man, far gone in T.B., but a master of his trade. He took a grim pleasure in showing me the discrepancies of Coppage's plumbing. "By God, Mr. Footner, he don't even know

how to sweat a lead pipe into an iron one!" Much of it had to be taken up and a fresh start made. In connection with the plumbing, I evolved out of my head what I fondly supposed was a septic tank. Such a thing had never been heard of down our way. It's all wrong, as I have since learned; nevertheless it operates upon some peculiar principle of its own.

We moved in early in December. There was no time to plaster, and we merely tacked building paper over the laths separating the rooms. However, we had a tight roof over our heads, a furnace in the cellar, and all the usual plumbing. Immediately there started in one of the hardest winters on record; old-timers will remember 1917-18. The first night we slept in the new house, winter was heralded by a gale which put our building to a test harder than any it has had to face since. My wife and I lay in bed in that guest room which so narrowly escaped being octagonal, with the baby close at hand ready to be snatched up. We trembled in unison with the trembling of our house, while we waited to find out if we had built strong enough. A summer storm is over in a few minutes; this wind shrieked around the eaves all night. The lulls were even more dreadful because we knew that each lull was preparing the way for a still more violent assault of wind. Sleep was out of the question. When I went to the window I could see lights in the three or four houses that were visible. Nobody dared sleep that night. It seemed to me that a lighted lamp would increase the danger, and we stood it out in the dark. A lot of damage was done in the neighborhood, but no house blew down. Mr. Ed's front door was blown clean off its hinges and driven through a second door into his dining-room.

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Following the gale, the mercury dropped out of sight and stayed there. Day after day we enjoyed sub-zero weather, which is very rare with us. Our tidal river froze from shore to shore—I have only seen this happen twice, and for six weeks I was able daily to skate around to the store in St. Leonard's Creek to fetch the mail; two miles by water. It was an exhilarating interlude. It has always bored me to skate around in circles; but to go some place on smooth ice and get something was delightful. Under any circumstances, you get a kick in going for the mail. There is always the chance that it may bring a check.

On the other hand, I was in continual trouble with my waterworks. The automatic ram chose one of the bitterest nights to stop pumping. It froze up while we slept and burst open before morning, along with the whole length of pipe that fed it from the artesian well. When I restored these parts and had taken measures to prevent the same thing from happening again, the pipe from the tank to the ground discovered a weak spot in its insulation and froze, leaving us without water. I built a wooden casing around the pipe with a door at the bottom and here I kept a lamp burning in freezing weather. It served until the temperature again dropped below zero, whereupon it froze even while the lamp was burning. At all hours of the night I would be forced to get up and tend to the ram, or climb in and out of the elevated tank in my rubber boots to keep the outlet pipe clear of ice. Even so, the taps were dry for many days at a time, and all water had to be toted up from the well in buckets.

In high latitudes the air becomes still in zero weather, and one is scarcely conscious of the cold.

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To us it is always borne down the river on the shoulders of a howling gale. With such a wind blowing, the hot air furnace we had installed seemed to have no effect whatever. There were only three spots in the house that we could keep warm; the kitchen, the children's little room on the south side, and the bathroom, which also faced south. The only place where I could work was sitting on the flush with my trusty Corona on its tripod before me. Since the pipes were frozen, the bathroom was useless for other purposes. I hate a high wind; it is the Enemy. When it roars down the river for three days and nights without cessation, the thews of the soul become stretched almost to the snapping point. But what a blessed peace steals in when the wind goes down! Now, in looking back, that time seems merely invigorating. We were all outrageously healthy. I can smile at the recollection of my bitter anger against the cantankerous ram and the damned pipes.

In March we had to go to town to keep a second engagement with the obstetrician. On the night preceding the day we had set for the journey, twelve inches of snow fell. Conceive of the feelings of the prospective father-for-the-second-time when he looked out in the morning and saw that. With eighty miles to drive! Luckily, as a heritage from the successful play, we possessed a powerful car, our Mercer of proud memory; and the snow lay flat; if it had drifted, the journey would have been out of the question. Leaving the women to get ready for the main dash, I set out to break a track to the state road at Lusby post office, four miles. As a matter of fact, I discovered that it was easier to break the virgin snow, than to plow through the messed-up tracks of others.

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We set out at two o'clock. I had chains, of course, and with a rare piece of foresight I stowed a coil of heavy wire in the car, with wire-cutters and pliers. We had no adventures to speak of en route, but it was a horrid strain on the driver. Every few hundred yards, one or other of the chains broke, and I had to get out and wire the ends together. The worst place was around Owings', where some lighthearted guy had got out his cutter and driven up and down the state road all day. It took me a solid hour to cover less than five miles through the mess he had left. The number one baby enjoyed the experience thoroughly. We reached Annapolis, fifty-five miles, in five hours; ordinarily, it takes an hour and a quarter. Here, to my joy, I found that the tracks had been cleared and the electric cars were running to Baltimore. So I abandoned the Mercer.

Chapter XVI

THE SECOND YEAR OF THE WAR, 1918, WAS A DIFFICULT time for the breadwinners in my trade. Like everybody else, we had to pay almost double for the necessities of life, but for us there were no increased war wages; on the contrary, our emoluments were cut. Owing to the increased cost of paper, the magazines had to take losses, and we were lucky if we could get half our former pay. It was an impossible sum in arithmetic, added to the ever-present anxiety and pain of the war. With all the other men of my age, I was registered for the draft, and I dared not think of what would happen if I were called up. There was nobody in our family connection on either side who could help out. In addition to the responsibilities I assumed by marrying, there were others that I had inherited.

In the spring we returned to Charles' Gift, now strangely altered by its long tail coming out behind, but not, I hope, disfigured. In the lovely leafing-out and blossoming time all the pains of the winter were forgotten; and the number one baby, Mary Ann, was old enough to go in swimming. The new house looked pretty bare, and we made haste to plant castor oil beans in the corners. An invaluable plant; you can almost see it grow; in the space of a few weeks it produces a tropical

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luxuriance of verdure where nothing was before. I don't know who told us about the castor oil plant; none were ever grown down here before. There is a providence in such matters; you have a need of certain something and lo, it is supplied!

The war baby was christened Phoebe. We had an elderly nurse for the two of them, who must also have been sent to us by special providence, because no ordinary white servant would have been content to stay at Charles' Gift; there was nobody for her to associate with. Luckily, Ellen was self-sufficient. She remained with us until she died. I cannot say that we loved her, but the children did. Mary Ann, the first-born, was her pride, and she received the successive newcomers with ill-concealed disgust. The negroes in the kitchen soon caught on to this foible, and by making believe to criticize her darling, would rouse her to a passionate fervor of defense.

Ellen was romantic. She told us when she came that her real name was Florence, but that she didn't care to have it used in service. She was of English descent, she said; her people were not of the aristocracy but of the landed gentry, whose pedigrees, of course, went much further back than those of the Lords who came with William the Conqueror. She had long brown hair only faintly streaked with gray, her only beauty, and she loved to wash it and afterwards walk around the lawn in the sun with a faraway look in her eyes, combing it out to dry with a long sweeping gesture. As such times we referred to her as Lady Godiva.

In all the six years she lived with us we never knew her to spend but one dollar, a tip that Jane Peverley gave her. She bought a gray tam-o'-shanter with it, as shaggy as a Skye terrier. Apart from her tam, she had

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only one hat; in winter it sported a velvet crown and in spring it became a straw hat. All the year round it was decorated with a kind of cockade like a black shaving brush. When one of the babies tore it out, another just like it appeared. For winter she knitted herself an aviator's helmet which pulled down to her shoulders, leaving a window for her innocent, withered little face. She used to pull this on when she took the children out and perch the hat, *cum* shaving brush on top of it. It was an odd sight on Riverside Drive. If I happened on her, she would turn her back, snatch off the helmet, put the hat back and greet me with a smile.

She had, she told us, several trunkfuls of good clothes "in her apartment in town" but they were too good to wear. She would patch and repatch her work dresses until they looked like Joseph's coat, and it did no good to give her new ones, because they were immediately put away. She used to appropriate the castoff bathing suits and sweaters (and when our family was done with them they were fit to be cast off) and, after raveling out the wool, would proceed to knit herself strange, parti-colored underdrawers. My wife said that she used to wear several pairs of these in winter. When we took a long motor trip, Ellen asked us please to give her a few minutes warning when we intended to stop in a town. Upon receiving the warning, she became as busy and quiet in the back of the car as a mouse behind the wainscot. She was peeling off enough layers of underclothing to enable her to walk.

There was a certain pair of shoes at which we learned to shudder. Each year, when it was time to go to the city, my wife would say: "Ellen, you must not take those old shoes to New York." "Very well, Mrs. Foot-

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ner." Yet the shoes always appeared. After this had happened a couple of times, my wife oversaw Ellen's packing and removed the shoes and threw them in the trash box. Nevertheless, after we had been in the city for a few days, Ellen was wearing the shoes. The following year we were setting out for England, and once more my wife made sure that the shoes were not in Ellen's bags before they were closed and carried down to the car. Missing Ellen while waiting for the train in Baltimore, I found her tucked in a corner of the station outside, absorbed in making adjustments under her coat. The coat fell apart for a moment and there were the old shoes tied around her waist, together with a couple of torn collars, and other indescribable garments that had been thrown out.

The food restrictions of the war years brought all Ellen's ingenuity into play. My wife was surprised and gratified by her willingness to keep the children out-of-doors in all kinds of weather until she learned that it was Ellen's habit to lead them from store to store all over town while she wangled an illicit pound of coffee here, of sugar there. We did not benefit by these purchases; they were carried to her "apartment." Once when I was bringing her wine up to town for her (in her spare time she was forever making wine out of wild fruit), I had a glimpse of her place. It consisted of two unpalatable little rooms on Gay Street, Baltimore, crammed with stores of spoiled preserves and wine; moldy foodstuffs and moth-eaten garments. Yet all Ellen's dreams centered there.

For one of so romantic a temperament, she led a dull life at Charles' Gift. She compensated for it by giving herself an emotional purge about every two months.

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Ellen's brain storms, we called them, and our hearts sank when the premonitory symptoms appeared. Anything or nothing served to provoke the first explosion and for two days thereafter the battle raged, always conducted on Ellen's side with a mien of lofty tragedy. It was my wife and I who lost our dignity. "Ellen, go up to your room until you quiet down," I would say, "or, by God! I'll carry you up!" Ellen drew herself up. "And who do you think you are, an English Lord? I will not go to my room. I will walk out of this house just as I am in my menial habit without a hat on my head or a penny in my pocket. I will walk and walk; somebody will have pity on me! Somebody will take me in!" This fetched me instantly, because I could hear the preposterous story she would tell the neighbors. After the vice was all out of her, she would become serene again, but she never apologized for her outbursts. We put up with it until she died because she was good to the children; they never suffered from her tempests, but only my wife and I.

New York was becoming too expensive for us and we spent the winter of 1920 in Charleston, 1921 in New Orleans. A motor trip to New Orleans in 1921 was no small adventure. All day long, in the back seat of the car, Ellen would be telling the children stories about herself in the third person; Eh-yeh said this and Eh-yeh did that. The tales to my ears were of an intolerable triviality, but I am obliged to confess that the children enjoyed them quite as much as they did my stories.

Ellen did not die at Charles' Gift, but I will tell of it here in order to round out the story. It never occurred to us that she was really old until I had to get her a passport; she then confessed to sixty-seven. She was

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hugely gratified by the voyage on a big ship and her chance to see Westminster Abbey and the Houses of Parliament. I can imagine the tall tales with which she regaled the British nursemaids in St. James' Park. Every morning she paraded the children up and down in front of Buckingham Palace when the guard was changed, and she got to know the members of the royal family as well as her own. At this time, Mary Ann and Phoebe were six and five and Jane was the current baby.

One day when they had come home from the Park, we heard a distressed little voice in the nursery crying: "Eh-yeh, Eh-yeh, get up! Please get up, Eh-yeh!" Eh-yeh never got up; it was a merciful cerebral hemorrhage. With immense difficulty, being aliens, we got her into St. Thomas' Hospital, where, two days later, she died. I cabled to a niece in Baltimore, and received instructions to send Auntie home. Whereupon my troubles began; but I need not go into that. It was our own consular office that put the most difficulties in my way. They made out to believe that I was in the business of sending dead bodies home as a means of conveying contraband into the country. When I finally received the bill-of-lading from the shipping office, to my horror it read: "One case of natural history specimens." I learned later that it is an old maritime custom. I dared not send this to Ellen's distressed relatives; I tore it up and made believe I had lost it.

We now had little naked children running up and down the beach at Charles' Gift, their pale, pretty bodies making a perfect complement to the white sand and the verdant background. This is a pleasure that the little Prestons probably missed, since the Puritans were afraid

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of nakedness even in children. In all the records of the province that have come under my eye, there is no mention of anybody having gone in swimming. I had been taught to swim in the good old way by being thrown bodily into deep water, and my recollection of it was so lively that I resolved to use other methods with my children. They were never forced to go in the water; they were left playing in the sand when their elders took a dip, and we found them following us in as soon as they were able to walk. Thus, water became as natural to them as air; they had to be watched at first to keep them from walking too far in.

I used to swim with a child clinging to my shoulders while he struck out with his feet. It was not long before they were paddling around of themselves like puppies; or turning somersaults in the water or walking on their hands. Each one in turn learned to dive from my shoulders. Also each in turn came to the age where he conceived it a great joke to make believe to be drowning and yell for help. Each child was spanked on its bare bottom for this, and none tried it more than once. One season we had a homemade float to dive from, which was good fun, though if too many got on it at once it would tip the whole bunch into the water. It was carried away in a storm and seen no more, though we are still reminded of it occasionally when the tide is very low and somebody stubs a toe on the rock that was used to anchor it.

There is no ointment without its fly, and down our way sea nettles are the swimmer's bane. These little jelly umbrellas have a long filament attached to the end of each rib and a flounce of lacy stuff where the stick ought to be; and they progress slowly through the water by shutting and opening up again. In the filaments and

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the lacy flounce, the devils secrete formic acid, which is the same stuff that makes the bee's sting sting. It is a mystery how the squashy creature can plant his sting under your skin, but he does so. Thick-skinned persons scarcely feel it, but it is painful for a while to the tender. Once in a while, a red one comes along with a sting like the kick of a mule. Their season is supposed to be limited to the month of July, but I have seen them hang on until Thanksgiving; on the other hand, in some years they do not appear at all. As I write this, we have not been troubled by them for three blessed seasons, but I reckon it is too soon to celebrate their final departure.

One day when Mary Ann was four or five, a friend's yacht dropped anchor about a furlong offshore. I sent the children into shallow water and swam off to welcome the visitors. I'll never forget the shock it gave me, on reaching for the yacht's ladder, to look over my shoulder and see my infant child swimming along behind me with a broad grin. I don't know how good swimming may be for children, we only swam for fun; but I can say that all this play in the water has given each of my four a fine natural carriage. A picture comes into my mind of Mary Ann at three or four, running up to the house holding herself as straight as an arrow. She sees that visitors have arrived, and an expression of painful reserve comes into her face. If she runs very fast, can she make the kitchen door before being seen? It is sad to have them grow up and not need you any more.

The old canoe remained serviceable for several years yet, and small fry enjoyed being taken for exploring trips to the headwaters of Hellen's or Kirkall's creeks,

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or down to Point Patience and Solomon's Island. Each child learned to wield the paddle at an early age, and one of their favorite stunts at swimming time was to go out in the canoe and dump it. We were accustomed to mend it by fraying out a small square of cotton and slapping it over the hole with a brush full of paint. When its patched skin finally disintegrated, it lay under the pear tree for a couple of years longer, serving my small crew for imaginary voyages to distant seas. In the water it was succeeded by a rowing skiff, more comfortable to fish from; to which we later added a small sail boat called *Chigoe*, which is really more trouble than it is worth, being chronically leaky. If one forgets to bail it every day it sinks.

Our voyages to Solomon's Island had an added interest after the government decided to moor the big, ex-German ships in the deep pool below Point Patience. First to come were the *Kronprinzessin Cecilie* and her sister ship, *Kronprinz Friedrich Wilhelm*. These in their day were the queens of the North Atlantic, and they are still among the most beautiful of steamships with their sheer bows and four big raking funnels. They are now called *Monticello* and *Mount Vernon*. Later came the *America* (ex *Amerika*), a still bigger ship, more economical of funnels and less beautiful; and finally the famous *George Washington*, biggest of the four, which carried President Wilson and the Peace Commission to Europe.

They have been lying there close to the shore, for years now, bring a strange flavor of the busy world into our simple countryside. When we motor to the Island we come upon them suddenly, and, no water being visible from that point, they have the effect of being moored in a cornfield. According to a story cur-

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rent in the neighborhood, the river has silted up under them and they are now fast aground, but I do not think this can be true. They are kept painted and greased against rust, and the engines turned over with compressed air once a month. Long superseded, they are of no earthly use unless the United States should engage in a foreign war and require transports again. Lloyds of London is quoting five hundred to one against that contingency. One would think they ought to be sold while the price of scrap is high, but I suspect they are carried on departmental books at many millions of dollars, and there is no doubt a fear of questions being asked in Congress if they were charged off.

I coveted the ships for the background of a detective story (*The Dark Ships*), and Jane and I were permitted to explore them. It was an eerie experience; the dusty cabins were full of ghosts; ghosts of passengers; ghosts of the doughboys who had picked out the bits of mother-of-pearl from the elaborate buhl panels in suites de luxe; ghosts of the officers who had left trifling personal belongings in their little cabins, and the ghost of the tragic president who went overseas in the state suite of the *America* to make a better world. Nearly all the movables were gone from the cabins, but the built-in settees were there, the vast rugs on the floors of the social rooms, the murals on the walls. Deep down in a third class saloon I found a forgotten piano whose notes raised uncanny echoes through the ship.

All the driftwood that washed up on our shore was carefully saved for the occasions when the family marched down to the beach to build a fire and toast hot dogs and bacon on pointed willow sticks for supper. I don't know anything that tastes better than these

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sandwiches of scorched bacon with a ripe tomato on the side. And how pleasant afterwards to sit in the red fire light in a happy state of repletion, and tell stories.

It was even more fun to load the grub box, the cake of ice and jug of tea, and seek a new beach to picnic on. Over on the bay we found a forgotten road that led down through a gully to the beach under the famous Cliffs of Calvert. This place had everything; a little stream flowing across the sand that could be damned and canalized; a fisherman's hut in case of a shower, and the cliffs themselves, which the children never tired of scrambling up. They are composed of a loose, powdery earth that lets you down as fast as you try to mount. Nobody can be hurt at this exercise, but only well dirtied. There was an extraordinarily nimble little boy called Jack Crane who used to accompany us, and his mark about halfway up the cliff stood unmatched as long as we went there. Nobody ever reached the top. Another inexhaustible amusement was the search for fossil shells in the cliff, and once or twice a lucky child found a petrified shark's tooth. One day a whole bunch of green bananas was seen floating in the water, and fetched ashore amidst wild excitement. It was carried home and hung in the cellar, where the fruit actually ripened, and for the first time before or since, all the Footners had as many bananas as they could eat. Thereafter we called the spot Banana Trove.

Later on, we used to go to Cove Point on the bay for our picnics, a place of entirely different character but even more attractive, especially on hot summer days. The point is a wedge of sand running out into deep water like the deck of a gigantic ship, exposed to every breeze that blows. On one side the water is shallow; on

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the other, the sand goes down like a wall; and on one side or the other there is nearly always a big surf piling in, making provision for both the bold bather and the timid. All the ships bound up and down the bay pass close to the point and signal to the lightkeeper, who thereupon telephones news of their progress to Baltimore. The ancient stone light tower stands at the shore end of the wedge.

The keeper at this time, Clinton Gray, was a jolly, red-faced man who always welcomed us as if we had been invited guests, and never tired of taking the children up in his tower to show them the mechanism that turned the light. How interested we were to discover that he was the son of one of the handsome Dixon girls who had eloped from Charles' Gift half a century before! None of us, I think, will ever forget the picnics at Cove Point; the flocks of little sea birds which we called curlews because of their plaintive cry; and who nonchalantly deposited their eggs in pairs all over the sand; the sense of mystery when night fell, the powerful light wheeling over our heads, and perhaps a schooner slipping silently by under full sail, dark, except for a tiny green eye in the shrouds.

The recollection of such excursions always involves the family car of the period. My children were born to cars and they will never know the pristine thrill of motoring. So much of our life at Charles' Gift has had to do with the cars—good memories and bad! Tires changed under a grilling sun; the relentless sideslip, over greasy clay ending in the ditch; the awful skids on sleet. How many times have we been dug out, whether from loose sand, bottomless mud or drifted snow? I became ashamed to call on my neighbors for

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help, because I had no team of mules with which to return the favor. These recollections are early ones; nowadays we can make dinner engagements in Washington or Baltimore with full assurance of getting there on time. In the beginning I knew a lot about cars; I had to. Adjustments and minor repairs had always to be made before starting on a trip. Nowadays one merely climbs in and steps on the starter, and I have forgotten everything I knew.

I have mentioned the little Buick and the big Mercer. In 1918 we decided that the latter stylish turnout was an unwarranted extravagance in wartime, and we traded it in for a new Chevvy. It was an unfortunate deal, because this particular Chevvy had something mysteriously wrong with its main shaft, which caused it at intervals to strip the gears of its differential. The repair bills were heartbreaking. After eighteen months we were lucky enough to sell a story to the movies, and with a part of the proceeds we brought one of the queer, Roman-nosed Franklins of 1920. Old drivers will remember them well. Even in its day, this model was considered grotesque, but it was an able job. It carried us to New Orleans and back over the unspeakable southern roads of that era without missing an explosion or even flattening a tire. We called her Connie, because the story had been bought for Constance Talmadge, and for five years she was a stranger to the repair shops. She was traded in for a very smart Franklin touring car which in five years more gave place to an Airman sedan, which ran full seven. I am sorry there are no more Franklins; they served us well.

The first Franklin, the Roman-nosed one, was among the earliest stock models to be brought out with wire

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wheels. The lock was imperfect, and after we had had the car a few years it developed a bad habit of dropping a front wheel at inopportune moments. It was not particularly dangerous, because the axle would merely drop to the road and scrape along while the released wheel bounded merrily ahead. One night when my wife was driving home with a couple of friends, this happened in front of Mr. Ransom Dean's house near Port Republic. The wheel leaped a fence and disappeared over a rise in the field beyond. We carried a fifth wheel on the running board, but the hub cap had gone with the runaway, and with it the lock.

Mr. Dean's house stood on a little hill back from the road. As my wife approached it, the tall, gaunt old man appeared in the doorway in his nightshirt, holding a lamp aloft, and crying in a sepulchral voice: "Don't come in! Don't come in!" As I have said before, Mr. Dean was our number one county character; his every act bore the stamp of a remarkable personality. Communications were established, and my wife telephoned to a neighbor to come and fetch her home. Early in the morning, Mr. Dean, wishing to be neighborly, set out and searched the fields until he came on the missing wheel. It never occurred to him to roll it; he carried it carefully back to the road in his arms; consequently he was tuckered out. He stood the wheel against the fence, and, going on up to the house, sat down by the window to watch it until one of us should come. He fell asleep and somebody came along and carried the wheel away!

This story has no point; I am only drawing a little county picture. Mr. Dean, for many years a widower, had lately married an old lady whom the whole county called Cousin Betty Armigle. She had been a great

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belle fifty years ago and still appeared in public in a lace coat and an enormous picture hat tipped up on one side. When she coquettishly entered the hall at one of our dances or card parties, all the old gentlemen spruced up and straightened their neckties. It was a treat to see them crowding around her trying to win a smile, kissing her hand, addressing her as "sweetheart," while the airy persiflage of 1888 was tossed back and forth. Alas! when I came around the corner of Mr. Dean's house that morning to ask about my wheel, a terrifying old witch in a mob cap stuck her head out of a second-story window, and, failing to see me, emptied an enormous chamber pot on the ground!

One Sunday afternoon in the fall, when the second Franklin, the smart touring car, was new, we started back to town after a week end at Charles' Gift. We carried our usual complement of mother, father, four children and tall Sarah, the maid, and besides the human freight were loaded with baskets of potatoes and apples, boxes of preserves, framed pictures for the house in town, and other things too numerous to mention. My wife and I sat in front with Jane between us; the two other little girls and Sarah behind, Sarah holding Geoffrey, aged two or three, in her lap.

Our end of the state highway was built as a gravel road with a high crown to shed water. Long ago it was resurfaced with broken stone, bound with tar, but the high crown is still there, and it puts a terrible strain on right hand tires when turning to the left. Going down Coster's Hill, not far from home, at a moderate speed, in turning to the left near the bottom, both right hand tires blew simultaneously, and the car was out of control. Just ahead of us was a culvert (there always is!)

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where the road narrowed and was carried between cement parapets. I managed to wrench the front of the car past the edge of the parapet, but the rear mudguard hung up on it. If it had been an ordinary car the mudguard would have ripped off and no further harm done, but the damned Franklin was so well built that the mudguard held, and the car pulled clean apart in the middle. When the top was dragged back, the windshield shattered and its glass showered in the laps of us in front.

The crash was followed by an awful silence. I instinctively looked over my shoulder and saw with a dreadfully sinking heart that Sarah's lap was empty; there was no baby. A second later I heard a roar like the bull of Bashan from underneath the car and my spirits revived, because I knew that if my only son could make such a noise, he was not mortally hurt. We pulled him out from between the two halves of the car, covered with grease but quite unscathed. Nobody was hurt except my wife, who, we found long afterwards, had sustained a broken finger. After that moment of silence, everybody went haywire except Jane. Phoebe, who had been sitting on the lefthand side, climbed over the other two in some extraordinary manner and was discovered running crazily back and forth on top of the parapet, weeping and wringing her hands. Little Jane never made a sound, but it struck deep in her; for months afterwards, whenever we approached a curve to the left, she would put her hand on my knee and whisper: "Careful, Daddy, careful!"

It was Sunday afternoon and the road was thronged with cars returning to town. One after another they sped by us with the passengers leaning out, gaping with

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idiot faces at the car broken in half and all the crying children. Nobody stopped and I was damned if I was going to signal for help. Taking the two bigger children to walk off their hysteria, I started back for Lusby post office, about three-quarters of a mile. Here I was lucky enough to find my neighbor, Mr. Joey Ludwell, in his car. When he returned to the scene of the accident the cars were lined up for nearly half a mile along the side of the road. When one stopped, all had to stop. One after another the vacant, slack-jawed faces came up to me asking, with a horrible eagerness: "What happened, Mister? What happened?" Until I felt murderous. Mr. Joey took us all back to Charles' Gift. That little brush with the cement parapet cost me four hundred and fifty dollars.

A much later recollection is of returning from the Christmas dance at Prince Frederick in a blizzard. The girls are grown up now; even Jane is provided with an evening dress. At the time there was something the matter with the last of the Franklins, and we went in an old station wagon we had acquired. Going up, the weather was all right, but upon issuing from the hall at two in the morning, we found ourselves in the middle of a regular Hudson's Bay uproar of wind and snow. My neighbor, Rudolph Coventon, got away just ahead of us and I had the advantage of his tail light down the road. So blinding were the sheets of snow, he had frequently to stop, whereupon we would run into him, but not hard, because both cars were merely crawling along.

He turned into his place with a shout and a wave of the hand and we faced the last mile on our own. Charles' Gift is approached by a long bare lane with a fence on each side. The North wind blows athwart it,

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and it is easy to figure what happens in a driving snow-storm; the road simply fills up level with the fence top. We bucked the drifts with increasing difficulty until we found ourselves blocked by the grandfather of all snowdrifts. I then tried to back out, but my power failed and I could not move either way. I discovered later that the carburetor sucked in so much snow through its air intake that the mixture would no longer explode.

There was nothing for it but mother and the girls to unload in their party dresses and slippers and plow back to the Coventons' house through snow knee-deep. I suppose it was something under half a mile, and there was a difficult hill to climb. I brought up the rear, and the white snow provided sufficient light for me to reveal a quaint procession of high-steppers ahead. I noticed that the girls were taking no chances of getting their evening skirts wet. It seems like a hilarious adventure now, but I reckon it was a pretty bedraggled crowd that presented itself at the Coventons' door for shelter. It was wonderful the way those good people turned out, lit all the fires in the house, made up beds and produced food, hot drinks and quaintly fashioned undergarments for the shivering.

In the morning we found the station wagon lost in the middle of a four-foot drift, and a couple of days passed before we could get it dug out. The whole neighborhood assisted in opening the lane. Meanwhile, I plowed home through the fields where the snow lay lighter, and returned bowed under an enormous pack of warm clothing, rubber boots, etc., like Santa Claus. We had a young pointer at the time called Nancy, who had no

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sense at all. She stalled in the snow and I had to carry her in addition to my pack.

That was a particularly decorative Christmas, but Charles' Gift in any year is the ideal place to spend Christmas, because the woods are full of holly and trailing cedar (or crow's-foot) and every fence is lined with Christmas trees. We may have Christmas decorations gratis, of an opulence unknown to millionaires. Like the Japanese, we bring in whole trees laden with scarlet berries and stand them in the corners. We can have a Yule log also, or two of them if we want. One year when the children were small, we gave a Christmas party, and the recollection of the glow in the big room that night still makes my heart ache pleasantly. We borrowed a piano and all the neighbor boys helped move it. We imported a marvelous negro pianist from Washington, along with his brother, who brought drums. To the room festooned with green, lighted with a reckless number of candles, and a fire blazing in each chimney, the girls in their pretty dresses added the last touch; by candlelight they were ravishing. It was like the colored supplement to a Christmas annual come alive. To those who are continually asking us if the fireplaces are sufficient to heat that big space, I can say that that night we had to pick up one fire with tongs and throw the logs out in the snow.

Since the children began growing up, we can no longer go home for Christmas because student girls and boys have too many engagements in town at that giddy season, but we still make a practice of driving home a little before the day to cut a Christmas tree and to fill the car with holly, cedar, and the showy plumes of the long-leaved pine.

Chapter XVII

A FEW MORE WORDS ABOUT THE FARMING AT CHARLES' Gift before the subject is dropped for good. The place comprised a hundred acres of the rich black "mould" (loam) which so excited the first settlers, but as I was neither a dirt farmer nor a gentleman ditto with bank account, my efforts to profit from the land were foredoomed to failure. It only took me away from my typewriter, which was our real meal ticket. During the first year of my proprietorship, I engaged Jimmy Lewis on the basis of wages, and lost money; and for the second year I put him on shares, hoping to stimulate him to greater efforts. But I had to come to his assistance so often that he was never able to meet the debt, and I ended the second year deeper in the red than ever. The European War was on, prices were soaring, and at this juncture my neighbor, Frank Hampton, dreaming of enormous profits, offered to rent eighty acres of my land for cash, with a three years' option to purchase. I thankfully took him up, and dismissed the cares of husbandry from my mind.

Frank was a queer fellow; lovable and exasperating. A little bow-legged, sandy-haired man with ears like pitcher handles; perky, positive, combative in manner; a big-talking little boy who had never grown up. He

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prided himself on being intensely practical, whereas there was never a wilder dreamer; and nobody could tell him anything. Faced with complete failure before he died, he was game and unsubdued to the end, and was then most lovable. Such was Fahdy. I never quarreled with him but once. Walking out towards Mears' Creek one morning, while the land was still mine though he was renting it, I found him and his men running a fence line and actually preparing to chop down the clump of glorious virgin pine trees on the creek shore that I have spoken of. He had no reason to cut them down except that they stood in the way of his fence. He had a passion for straight lines. Ordinarily, I am a far from violent man, but my eyes must have struck sparks that morning, for the indomitable Fahdy for once was subdued. The trees were spared, but I may say that the day after title to the land passed from me to him, they were cut down. I knew they would be.

Fahdy was a railway clerk who had become a timber cruiser and the owner of a sawmill, and he knew no more about farming than I did. Both he and his wife, the beautiful Miss Sophy, were very well connected, and at intervals one or another of their relatives would die, leaving them a snug legacy. The receipt of such a legacy at this time enabled Fahdy to start operations at Charles' Gift on a big scale. He had made up his mind to put the entire eighty acres in alfalfa. He cleared away all the fences, plowed and replowed the land, and kept it cultivated for an entire season to destroy the weed seeds. In the following spring he inoculated his land and sowed seed. He had to wait two years for a crop. In the meantime, having figured on paper that he was going to get two tons of hay to the acre, he built two gigantic

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barns to store it. No such barns were ever seen in our parts; poor Fahdy never got enough alfalfa to completely fill even one of them.

The stuff grew well enough, but the books he had consulted failed to tell him that our country was too near the sea to cure it properly. On the dry plains of Kansas, alfalfa cures a fresh green, while with us, though it may be equal in feeding value, it looks blackish, and it cannot compete in the market with the fresh western hay. Fahdy sold one crop to good advantage in the last year of the war when everything was high; the following year it was left on his hands. He discovered, moreover, that whereas a stand of alfalfa will last fifteen years or longer in Kansas, with us the wild grasses and the weeds will choke it in three. After struggling on a while, he went broke; however, he sold his land to good advantage to George Turner and Goodman Goldstein of Prince Frederick, and they have been stuck with it since. It is impossible to get a good tenant on the place because there is no fit house for him to live in.

When the farm was taken off my hands, I had more time to develop the home place. My twenty acres includes a big field to the south of the house, and thus secures to us the curving beach, all the deep water frontage, the point of rocks and our share of the cove beyond. I also, with uncharacteristic foresight, saved a strip which enables us to drive out to the county-maintained road over our own land. By this time, the early nineteen-twenties, my trees were growing bravely, but the ancient house still had a painfully undressed look. Standing up in the middle of flat fields, it was not like a sheltering homestead, and I began to think of hedges and shrubbery.

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An opportune bankruptcy of the Prince George's nursery enabled me to secure half a hundred little arbor vitae trees at a price within my means. I planted these along the back of the lot, leaving space for a service driveway behind them. We intended to lay out a more formal approach to the house, but this was put off from time to time, and in the meantime the yard grew so in beauty we could not bear to sacrifice any of it to a commonplace graveled drive. Consequently, all visitors to Charles' Gift are still forced to drive up to the kitchen door. Our house does not conform to any of the accepted rules for houses, but we like it.

The first arbor vitae trees were set out in the spring and immediately thereafter a drouth set in that lasted for many weeks. Every day I had to tote fifty buckets of water for the fifty trees. They all came through and have repaid me a thousandfold for my trouble. That hedge, or screen rather, of rich evergreen foliage is now from fifteen to twenty feet high with a serrated skyline. Mr. Ed had told me that if I ran the cultivator up and down each side of the row for the first few years the trees would grow twice as fast. I did and they did; so I pass the information along. Some years after they were planted came the worst drouth we have ever known, and in spite of assiduous bucket-toting five of the trees died, three singles and two together. It seemed like a heart-breaking loss, but the three single spaces have now filled up and the double space looks as if it had been left there on purpose. Moreover, it serves the purpose of giving us a glimpse of arriving guests in time to make hasty adjustments.

I needed something to delimit the front yard, since I cannot afford to keep that space in grass all the way

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to the river bank. I dislike privet, it is so smug and usual, besides being bare in winter; box grows too slowly. As the nursery was still selling off its arbor vitae, I got fifty more in the fall, and planted them at four foot intervals across the front. This has become a dense hedge kept roughly clipped to a height of four and a half feet, and is the admiration of all beholders. One wonders why more arbor vitae is not planted instead of the everlasting privet. It has everything to recommend it, and harbors only one pest, the bagworm, which, however, is not hard to control. This curious creature makes a bag out of the foliage for himself which, until you become wise to him, you would swear was a little cone hanging to the evergreen. He travels along the twigs eating the foliage as he goes, carrying his bag with him and enlarging it as he grows. The bag is so stoutly glued together, it is all but impossible to tear it apart. This protects him from the birds. Mr. Ed was acquainted with the bagworm's habits. He told me to spray with arsenate of lead, and when I did so the worm folded.

Along the south side of the yard we have to have a fence because cattle are sometimes grazed in the field beyond. To hide the ugly fence, I put in a hundred spiraea van houttei which likewise grew inordinately when cultivated. In just a few years, the clumps had closed up; had outgrown the fence posts behind, and were trailing their green veils to the ground. The spiraea is bare in winter, of course, but in its blossoming time it is the loveliest thing on the place; it is more beautiful than the ancient pear tree. In the spring everything in our household is referred to the blooming of the spiraea hedge. It starts between May first and tenth, according

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to the season, and lasts about two weeks. It takes your breath away when you round the corner of the road and come up to the house lot; it is like a continuous tumbling white cascade, or, when the wind stirs it, like a lovely ballet swaying to unheard music. I have learned that to trim a spiraea hedge in the ordinary way is to mar its beauty. If it can be avoided, it should not be trimmed at all, but if it will grow beyond its bounds, it should be thinned out, not clipped, choosing always the tallest shoots and cutting them far back. Thus its lovely drooping habit will not be spoiled.

Though I had never had a yard of my own before, I had definite notions of how it ought to be planted. Not too much, that is the unpardonable sin—there are several things in my yard at this minute which would be better cut down, but I am weak about it. And no spotty specimens scattered around. I planted clumps of shrubbery in the two front corners; all old favorites; on one side forsythia, syringa (mock orange, locally), weigela, abelia and a rare lilac. Down alongside the cottage lawn, we have a whole hedge of the native lilacs, white and purple. In front of this clump I planted something new to me, the *rosa ragusa*, which, after sulking for a few years, suddenly started to grow like castor oil plants and is now hiding the more refined beauties of the second row. It is very difficult for an amateur to compose shrubbery successfully, since he cannot foresee just what shapes his specimens will assume.

In the other corner of the yard there is a crimson weigela in the front row, with a couple of deutzias, which have taken more than their allotted space, and a double syringa, my particular joy. The scented white flowers are larger than those of the ordinary kind, and

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each has a delicately poised inner circlet of petals that gives it a rare chic. I lead everyone to the double syringa, and the grateful bush, as if stimulated by my praises, keeps putting out a branch or two of flowers all summer. Behind are three or four crêpe myrtles and a japonica which unfortunately produces blossoms of a dirtyish pink, instead of the flame color I had visualized. In my grandmother's garden, the japonica was called "Moses in the Burning Bush," which exhibits some confusion in Bible history, because as I remember the story, it was the Lord who was in the bush, not Moses.

The crêpe myrtles are among our best show pieces. The common variety bears bold plumes of lacy blossoms, cerise in color, and there is also a crimson which is fine. I bought an alleged lavender variety, but it came out pink like the others. The Potomac River is supposed to mark the northern limit of the crêpe myrtle, but they do well with us. Only once, in the exceptionally bitter winter of 1935-36, the finest specimen was killed back to the root. In less than three years it has grown ten feet high again. The particular virtue of the crêpe myrtle is that it blooms through August and September, when other shrubs are through. An old crêpe myrtle with its ragged habit and mottled yellow trunk is full of character.

The problem of foundation planting occupied me for several years. I put all sorts of things along the front of the house, and yanked them up again because they didn't look right. Suddenly it occurred to me that foundation planting was a modern notion, anyhow, and had no place around my ancient dwelling. I then sowed grass up to the house wall, leaving only an Adam and Eve (*Yucca*) clump at each corner, and a couple of old-

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fashioned roses which appear to be growing directly out of the brick foundation. In the middle there is a tangle of honeysuckle flung over a frame at the front door, and this simple arrangement carries out the homely effect I was after.

Opposite the kitchen door there is a row of forsythia to make a screen for the garbage can, the trash box, the chicken coop, and other unbeautiful necessities. In front of the forsythias, I planted half a dozen of something a nursery (not my friend, Tobe's, place) sold me for dogwood bushes. They turned out to have no relation whatever to the dogwood we know, which I have never succeeded in transplanting successfully, but are more like elderberry bushes. At any rate, I don't like them, and this fall they shall be relegated to a distant fence line.

The catalogues describe other marvelous things I'd like to put in, but there seems to be no more room. Like so many innocents, when we first set up a home in the country, we planted ramblers all over the place. They always became mildewed; and when we found we were paying for a week of glory with a whole season of unsightliness, we cast them out again. On the other hand, the big climbing roses reach a perfection in our latitude that they rarely attain farther north, and we have plenty of those; two of the finest specimens being trained up in front of the south porch to mitigate the summer sun. Of these, my favorite is Climbing Mrs. Aaron Ward (her name provokes a smile!), which produces bushels of long-stemmed yellow buds in May and scattered blooms through the season. Next to her in worth, I rate the invaluable Dr. Van Fleet, who seems to be proof against bugs and worms and fungi.

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Along with the shrubbery I began to experiment with flowers. I knew nothing about the culture of flowers, and after fifteen years I know little more, but I've had a lot of fun finding it out. We were almost the first people in the county to go in for flowers, but everybody does now, and there are much finer displays than mine. Our first flowerbed was a modest circle surrounding the broken stump of the ancient cherry, blown down by the twister. Here for over twenty years we have grown nasturtiums. They love the spot and reward us with thousands of their fragile vivid blooms borne on long stems. Climbers in the middle sprawl over the stump, with the low-growing kind outside. Each summer there is a tussle with an army of black aphids, cunning enough to fix themselves underneath the leaves where an ordinary spray cannot reach them. Sometimes the aphids won out and sometimes we did. Now I have procured a hand sprayer with the nozzle on top of the shaft. When this is poked under the plants it shoots upward and the aphid gets an unpleasant surprise.

In the winding bed bordering the road to the beach backed by grapevines all kinds of things have been tried out. The principal survivals are the jonquils and narcissi, which bloom first; then iris of many varieties, planted in clumps at the back, and blooming at the same time as quantities of sweet rocket, followed by peonies, which make a glorious but too brief showing. The interstices are filled with coreopsis, phlox and gailardia for summer blooming, Japanese anemones for early fall, and chrysanthemums for last. There are also lilies, but the field mice look on the bulbs as special winter tidbits; consequently the lilies are apt not to return in spring. I have succeeded in naturalizing some-

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thing which nobody in this part of the world ever saw before: St.-John's-wort, with blossoms like immense buttercups. Pinks, primulas, crane's-bill and the false plum-bago make good edgings, and we like the dazzling orange-scarlet splotches of Oriental poppies.

When the arbor vitae hedge in front of the house began to grow up, I laid off more flower beds within its shelter. Having found that the rock edging was difficult to clear of wire grass and weeds, I marked out the new beds with brick set flush with the earth, so that the outside wheel of the lawn mower could run over them, saving many hours of edging with the spade or clipping by hand. In these beds the order of blooming is, roughly: violets, tulips, iris, columbine, delphinium (along with coreopsis for a complement), with phlox for the dog days, and for fall Japanese anemones, pink, red and white, double and single, and chrysanthemums. Also, of course, many single specimens of plants that we acquire one way or another. The long bed makes a lovely sight in spring, and later becomes a wild tangle. However, any attempt to reduce it to formal order would be out of keeping. All along the inside of this bed I set out rosebushes, because it seemed to me that modern roses planted by themselves have a scrawny look. However, the fastidious rose does not prosper too well among the commoner plants, and I have laid out a separate rose bed elsewhere.

Cornflowers, hollyhocks and zinnias grow opposite the kitchen porch; more zinnias, marigolds and baby sun-flowers along the back fence. These are all the annuals that I have time to look after. We have quantities of dahlias, which find our conditions exactly to their liking. These, for protection against summer squalls, are

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set out on the south side of the house and in the corner made by the tall arbor vitae screen. We do not care for the exquisitely tinted cabbages which carry off the prizes, but favor principally the single varieties on their long, slender stems, and also the baby single dahlias, which come in such a wonderful variety of color and habit. I like to gamble each year on a packet of dahlia seed just to see what I get.

So much for the flowerbeds. When you say "garden" in our country, kitchen garden is understood. We took up a row of inferior apple trees in Ab's orchard and made our vegetable patch there. This spot proved to be not very good soil, and though we still use it, we have laid out a larger garden outside the arbor vitae hedge in front. For many years our vegetables were nothing to brag about because, having no stock on the place, we had no manure, and the farmers (quite rightly) ask a prohibitive price for it. Commercial fertilizer is not the same thing at all. Finally, I learned how to make compost. Now every scrap of vegetable matter is saved; the compost heaps are hidden all over the place; every spring one or two of them are ripe, and in consequence we can hold up our heads with any vegetable raiser in the county. We eat asparagus every day from April until June. Our eggplants are as big as your head—such a silly name for this grand vegetable; I nominate the French word *aubergine* in its stead. Our cucumbers grow a foot long; our golden bantam corn is famous in a corn-raising country.

I have only one failure to confess, but it is an important one—cantaloupes. It is only about once in three years that we obtain first-rate cantaloupes. *Cucumis melo* is a capricious plant. I blame it on my soil, of

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course; too heavy. Yet I am bound to confess that my predecessor at Charles' Gift, old Dennis Dixon, raised famous cantaloupes here, and boasted of them in and out of season. Dordress Melling, our local bootlegger, told me that when he was young he and the other boys got so fed up with hearing old Mr. Dixon boast of his cantaloupes, that one moonlight night, when they knew he had just planted his hills, they stole into his garden patch and replaced the seed with pumpkin seed. When these powerful plants appeared, Mr. Dixon near burst with pride. Naturally, the boys dropped around and complimented him on his superb cantaloupe vines. "Yes sir; yes sir," Mr. Dixon replied; "a very choice variety. I developed it myself." Later he became very silent on the subject of cantaloupes.

I am not enamored of the drudgery of putting in a garden; Herman does that; but there is nothing that gives me such a sense of opulence as gathering the crop. I am willing to spend an hour any time under the mid-day sun picking the bean row; I get an almost sensuous pleasure out of fetching in overflowing baskets of asparagus stalks, of puffy spinach, crimson tomatoes or plump ears of corn. What an illustration it is of the perversity of mankind that vegetables are not highly regarded in the country, where anybody may have them, and are eagerly sought after in town, where they are both inferior and expensive! City people, however rich, never get the best in vegetables because asparagus, spinach, green peas and corn begin to lose their flavor an hour after they are gathered. And vegetables are so wholesome! Up at Reiman Smith's store one winter night, Lambert Johnson was weighing a cabbage on his hand while he debated its purchase. "Mr. Footman,"

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he asked, "is it true that cabbage contains plenty wittamens?" "Wittamens?" said I, puzzled. "Sure, you know, what you read about in the paper; wittamens, wittamens." A light broke on me. "That's right, Lambert," I said; "cabbage is rich in wittamens."

In the early days of gardening at Charles' Gift, Arthur Mooney, the photographer, was a regular visitor in the spring. This old gentleman with the face of a saintly abbot, would arrive from New York with sundry newspaper screws of plants and seeds and bulbs that he had wangled or filched at the Bronx Botanical Gardens. He would immediately knot a handkerchief in each corner, draw it over his somewhat sparsely covered pate, and set to work with a trowel. All manner of beautiful things surprised us later; many died; some thrived and multiplied; a few have escaped control and become pests. Mr. Mooney naturalized lilies, narcissi and iris all over the place, where they still bloom and spread.

When he was not gardening he would be mooching around with his little camera, photographing the house, the pump, the nasturtium bed, the ducks, and particularly the children. He was so sly that they rarely knew when they were being snapped. Phoebe, completely unconscious of self, was a grand model, and nurse Ellen, with her noble Roman air, superb. Our box of photographs of Mr. Mooney's taking is the most precious item in the family archives.

Another who loved flowers was our humble little friend, Mrs. Herring. The Herrings are poor white people who live a couple of fields away on the Coventon farm. At this time, when our children were small, there was Mr. Herring, Mrs. Herring and their three sons; Noll and Bill and Rannie. Also, they had a boarder, a

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handsome Hawaiian youth named Paul, who by some strange chance had been cast on our shore. It was, and is, a distressed family. Mr. Herring was eighty-six years old, a veteran of the Confederate army and no longer, as we say, hard good. He received a dollar seventy-five a month pension from the poor fund. He had a long white beard stained with tobacco juice, and he tottered along the road supporting himself, like a pilgrim, upon a long staff cut in the woods. Mrs. Herring, while much younger than her husband, was nevertheless, old too, a tiny woman like an aged little girl, and with a little girl's squeaky voice. Of the boys, Noll was normal, a mournful young man carrying the weight of the world on his bowed shoulders. Little, red-haired Bill, on the other hand, had a beautiful, wicked face and fiery eyes. He was lame and walked with a heavy list to starboard. As for poor Rannie, he was not only gone in the wits, but gone in the back also. When he was young, he could still hobble along with two sticks; later his little mother pulled him in a creaking wagon. Each year, on Election Day, Rannie enjoyed a triumph. He was sent for in an automobile and carried into the polling place sitting in a chair.

The tiny Mrs. Herring used frequently to come trudging to our house in her hob-nailed shoes and faded sunbonnet. Perhaps she would have a few eggs in a tin bucket to sell, or would bring a grass bag hoping to pick up apples under the trees or any unconsidered trifle. She would walk slowly along the beds, bending down to cup the flowers tenderly between her hands and talking baby-talk to them. "Good Mawnin', dollin. Ah, pretty li'l thing, in yo' pink dress and green petticoat! Is you lonely when it's dark, dollin? Never mind; God loves

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you." And so on. She had a twin sister who lived among the forgotten people in the woods down Drum Point way. When we drove down there it was startling to come upon a replica of our faded, plaintive little neighbor, beside the road. Ellen occasionally took the two little girls across the fields to the Herrings for eggs, until one day, as they stood in the doorway of the shack, old man Herring rose silently from behind the stove with his long white beard, like an apparition. He had been sleeping on the floor. Mary and Phoebe never stopped running until they got home.

Old man Herring craved male society, and often he would take his long staff and totter all the way to the store on St. Leonard's Creek. It was nearly three miles around by road. The men who sat in the store made cruel fun of him, but he always went back. Big John Hack, with his heavy dewlaps, was the leader in the fun; as Mr. Ed said, he was an awful tease. "Didn't mean e'er bit of harm; it was just his fun." Finally there came a day when they teased the old man for the last time. I wasn't present on this occasion; Mr. Ed told me about it, and I will give the story as near as possible in his words.

"Old Man Herring would come in store and John Hack say: 'Good day to you, Mr. Herring; sit ye down on orange crate, yonder. You just in time to settle an argument we having. Who won the battle of Bull Run?'

" 'Our side win, Sir,' hollers Old Man Herring. 'I can see them Yankees running yit!'

" 'Reckon you shot many a Yankee you'se'f that day, Mr. Herring.'

" 'Deed, I doggone swear, did I!' hollers Old Man, wagging his beard right fierce.

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" 'Well, show us how the battle went, Mr. Herring. History books don't agree on it nohow.'

" 'History books is full of lies, Mr. Hack! Because the Yankees own the printing presses. I was to Bull Run myse'f, and I'll show you the truth of it!'

"With that he always begun to draw out lines of battle on the floor with 's staff, and explain everything. Would get all balled up and make out to rub out the 'maginary map with's foot and start over. The men asking all kinds fool questions to mix him up. Would be near busting to laugh, but held it in 's long 's possible. Old Man pleased as a child to get so much attention.

"So it would go time after time. He so windy in the wits he never catch on till they bust out laughing. Then shake his fist and squall with rage and that raise a fresh laugh. Old Man would sit down and cry like a child, the tears running down in his beard. Then John Hack give him candy or plug tobacco and all forgiven.

"John Hack always kep' a pistol lying on a shelf under 's counter. A reminder of the old days when there was oyster pirates in the Chesapeake. He kept store at Drum Point then and had to be ready for trouble. Them days is long past now, and that pistol been lying there years and years without e'er shot being fired. Ev'body come in the store know that pistol and know 'twas loaded still. There was a box with extra shells alongside it.

"On this day I'm telling you about, I walk down to the store with Jinny's coal oil can, and John Hack he setting there cleaning th' old pistol, having nothing better to do. All the pieces was spread out on the counter, and he fiddling with a vaseline rag. He had thrown the

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shells in the box with other shells. His boy Richie was standing, watching his Pap, and chewing a grass. Nobody else in the store.

"After John Hack finish cleaning the pieces, he snap all together and throw the pistol on the counter, and me and him go into the shed where he kep' his coal oil bar'l to fill my can. After we come back, other men drop in, my brothers Gussie and Jimmy being two of them, and I stop a while to talk. The boy Richie was called up to the house by his ma to chop wood.

"Bime-bye Old Man Herring come in, leaning on 's staff. He may have been a spunky little devil when he went soldiering, but now he was so wasted and shrunk up wa'n't nothing to him. You remember him. All he had left that belongs to a man was his long white beard. He was e'er combing it out sideways with his fingers like angel playing th' harp.

"John Hack lose no time in starting the fun. 'Reckon if was another war you'd enlist again, Mr. Herring,' says he.

" 'Sure would,' said Old Man, squaring up.

" 'No,' says John Hack, making out to look him over, 'you too old to shoot any more.'

" 'Old I may be, but I can serve my country!' Old Man squalls.

"John Hack tips us a wink. 'Well, make out I'm a Yankee,' he says to Old Man Herring, 'just for a demonstration. There's a pistol on the counter behind you. I'll lay you a dollar to nothing you can't fire it.'

"Old Man begun to glimmer there was a joke in it. 'I might hurt you if she went off.'

" 'Taint loaded,' said John Hack. 'After I finish clean-

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ing her, I didn't load her yet. Ask Mr. Ed yonder. He was here.'

"The gun was lying exactly where I seen John Hack drop it. 'Sure, 'taint loaded,' says I.

" 'Look,' says John Hack, 'I'll stand against the door to give you a fair mark.'

"Old Man pick up the gun. He couldn't see no more than a bat in broad day, but the feel of it seem to bring something back. He didn't trem'le so much.

" 'Put it in you' back pocket,' says John Hack. Old Man obey like a child. 'Stand in front of me now; walk away ten paces, turn and show us how quick you can draw.' Old Man do jus' 's he say, solemn as a judge, and the rest of us get ready to laugh. Certain, big John was making a good mark spread out against the door. Old Man turn quick, and jerk out the gun. Half the seat of his pants come with it, the stuff being rotten, but he don't stop for that. He present, and Wham! by God, Sir, the gun went off, and a bullet went through the door not six inches from John Hack's thick neck.

"We was flabbergasted. John Hack, he didn't fall down. He kinda sunk like a dishrag dropped on the floor. Then he was sick. Old Man Herring just stood there with the gun. His wits had wandered away. But pretty soon he recollect to ask for his dollar. The rest of us made it up between us to keep him quiet.

"What happened was, when John Hack and I went into the shed to fill the coal oil can, the boy Richie slipped the shells back in the gun, and afterwards was called up on the hill to he'p his ma."

Old man Herring was laid away long ago, and poor, shambling, mouthing Rannie beside him. After a couple

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of seasons, the exotic Paul, the Hawaiian, vanished. The red-headed little gimpy-leg, Bill, ran away with old Smiley's young wife, and after a hectic career as a rum-runner, has become gray and respectable. He and the former Mrs. Smiley live in a little house at the turn of the road with a constantly enlarging brood of children. Little Mrs. Herring is still in the shack across the fields with her remaining son, Noll. She is too feeble to come and visit us nowadays, but I hear that she still raises chickens and "busts" wood for the fire. White-haired Noll, who works for Rudolph Coventon, plods up and down the road, crushed by life; looks up peering at you as if from another world. He is very pleased when spoken to. He looks sixty-five and is between forty-five and forty-eight. He has an agreeable, courteous voice. He never got a woman of his own.

Chapter XVIII

OURS IS NOT A PET-KEEPING FAMILY; I DON'T KNOW WHY. It used to trouble me in the beginning and I made several attempts to induce my children to care for dogs, cats, squirrels, turtles and so on; never with much success. We were handicapped, of course, in that we left our home every year for a long period. The dogs and the cats had to be boarded out with a negro family, and when we got them back in the spring their manners had deteriorated. The first dog I can remember was a mournful pup christened Bobo after a character in the *Substitute Millionaire*. He used to retire under the kitchen porch when the world was too much with him, and bump his head against the floor and howl.

Bobo's successor was a short-legged dog, name gone from me, which was presented as a "beagle hound." He was an ardent sportsman, but whenever he ran a rabbit he tripped over his own turned-out big feet and described a somersault. Afterwards came Gus, whom Geoff described as a third-grade collie, which seemed fair enough until we discovered that Geoff was trying to say "thoroughbred," which Gus certainly was not. He was all right, though, an affectionate and energetic animal, but after he had boarded with the washerwoman all winter he looked so common we couldn't love him any

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more, and the washerwoman kept him. For years afterwards, Gus greeted us with extravagant affection, and my conscience pricked me. However, it is arguable that he has had a better life with the washerwoman's family. He learned to be self-sufficient, and he doesn't have to behave.

Our last dog was the Nancy that I have spoken of. She was a pedigreed pointer, and a beautiful creature; it was a treat to watch her running. Geoff, now getting to be a big boy, became fond of Nancy, but I disliked her exceedingly because she was an imbecile. Her mind never developed beyond the puppy stage. She looked at you laughing and lolling like an idiot. It was impossible to teach her anything; she dug holes all over the lawn for no reason, and pulled the bark off my trees. Her chiefest amusement was to snatch papers out of the trash box and tear around the yard with them streaming over her back. Finally, she took to running the Coventons' sheep. I suspected that it was the Coventons' own dog that taught her this trick, but I had no wish to make an issue of it. Nancy was destroyed and has never been regretted by me.

We soon gave up trying to keep chickens because we couldn't keep them within fences; but for many years we bought a setting of duck eggs each spring and borrowed a hen to hatch them—a dirty trick on the hen. The ducklings were able to fend for themselves almost as soon as hatched, and the hen could be sent home. Charming creatures, ducklings, and highly decorative at every stage of their growth; moreover, they do not scratch. Mr. Mooney never tired of photographing them. Of the various broods we raised, only one ever entered the river, though all of them went mad with joy when

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enough rain fell to make puddles. I have seen them waddle down to the edge of the bank, take a look at the river and come contentedly home again. In the case of the brood which did take to the water, we were always in trouble. They would paddle downstream until they met up with Miss Bea Ludwell's ducks, their brothers and sisters. When we pursued them in the canoe, it was impossible to tell which were Miss Bea's and which ours. Amidst a terrific quacking and beating of wings on the water, we seized the twelve plumpest ones and brought them home. As cold weather drew on, these big white ducks became very enticing. While beautiful to look at, they are not especially endearing; they could be sacrificed without too much grief.

Not so the pigs. Every spring we used also to buy a couple of little pigs to raise. Pigs are extraordinarily likable, especially when they are permitted to be clean. Our pigs had the run of the orchard all summer; it was not until fall that they were penned up to be fattened with corn. One pair, I remember, were christened Speedy and Shermie after two of our dearest friends, and another pair Arthur, after the beloved Mr. Mooney, and Christina, for Grandmother. Our pigs excited the liveliest affection in the whole family, and there were painful scenes when the End came. Speedy and Shermie escaped while the knife waited and the barrel of hot water to scald their bristles, and there was a mad squealing chase all over the place which ended only when the exhausted Shermie gave up and, with his head lowered between his front trotters, waited for the butcher. Killing pigs is a bad business, they are so human; and we decided not to have any further truck with them until they reached the stage of sausages and ham.

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Our neighbors, of course, take it in their stride. During the first cold weather in November or December, everybody kills, and for days thereafter we are all surfeited with spareribs, chine bone and "fresh," the local term for pork tenderloin. Sausage is most delicious, we think, when fresh made, and we like it preserved in jars in the fresh stage, sealed with lard. The country custom is to stuff it and smoke it. Smoked sausage is good, too; it is the time-honored breakfast for Christmas morning. Hams and shoulders are first pickled in brine for a few weeks, then rubbed with salt, pepper and saltpeter and hung in the smokehouse. During the weeks following Christmas, you may see the smoke lazily seeping through the cracks of the meat house that stands in every farmyard. Country cured ham is the most prized item on our bill of fare, coming even before fried chicken. We consider Maryland hams much superior to the famed Smithfield variety, because they are fatter, hence juicier. Store ham bears the same relation to country ham that store cheese does to Camembert. Neighborhood joke: A city woman who had received a shoulder from Mark Ludwell by mistake, wrote asking him please not to send her any more front hams.

To return to the subject of pets; the children, of course, always longed for a pony, or, as they grew bigger, a horse to ride. We never encompassed a horse, though one year I went so far as to get Mr. Ed to build me a stable down in the hollow at the outer edge of our field. I planned to follow it with a cottage nearby and to engage a man and his wife to live on the place all year. Then we could keep a cow as well as a horse, and all that goes with a farm. But when it came to the point, I dared not assume the increased overhead, and we

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never got either the hired man or the horse. The empty stable gradually came to be known as Footner's Folly. Mr. Ed always shook his head regretfully when it was mentioned; such a well-built stable, and so ingeniously arranged inside! The seasons passed, and it became almost smothered behind and under sumach, sassafras and trumpet vines. After it had stood for nearly twenty years, it blew down in a high wind, still a virgin.

We have had cats at various times, but none stand out except two who came to us as kittens and were christened Inky (short for Inchiostro) and Tillie. It turned out later that there had been a mistake in respect to the latter, and her (his) name was changed to Tillman. They were a grand pair, sleek and electric, and I shall never forget the pleasure we had in watching their graceful play. Kittens should always be raised in pairs. In the end, of course, they came to the predatory stage, and when they brought in dead birds we hated them. When they were given away, as it was now obvious that we were a non-pet-keeping family, we decided to let it go at that.

When the cats went, the birds came back in greater numbers than ever. Since we have had neither dog nor cat for several years now, Charles' Gift has become a sort of sanctuary for robins, thrushes, orioles, cardinals, mockingbirds, catbirds, wrens and various modest little brownies that I can't name. Apparently these sorts of birds prefer to nest around a house—provided the people don't keep cats. In the beginning we were plagued with noisy sparrows who drove the others away, but they have migrated, thank God! and we haven't seen a sparrow around the place in many years. Swifts nest in the big chimneys every year. Occasionally, after

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heavy rain, there is a tragedy when the loosened nest falls in the ashes; and sometimes a bewildered swift goes adrift in the big room. He can never find his way out; thus I have held the sooty, velvety little bodies, panting in my hand, and marveled at the provision of Nature which tips their tail feathers with a row of spikes. With what joy the released bird flies away! The soft roaring of the swifts' wings in the chimney is in the web and the warp of Charles' Gift recollections.

The cardinal bird is a great favorite; he stays with us all winter. When there is snow on the ground he makes one think of the Princess who pricked her finger, and the drop of blood that fell in the snow. I often hear the lovely cadence of the meadow lark; but he's a reticent creature; he stays away from the house. Wrens are the friendliest. For many years a pair has nested somewhere near my bedroom window, and lying in bed mornings, I see little Johnny Wren hopping along the ridge of the Casa di Playhouse cocking his tail, and singing his heart out. I put a wren house over the garage door and it was promptly occupied. Every time the car went in and out the mother wren came out on her front porch and scolded us. Alas! one morning the head of a little snake could be seen sticking out of the hole, and the wren house has been empty since.

There is always at least one pair of mockingbirds nesting around the house, most often in the honeysuckle over the front door. The cock is an engaging clown. He always appears to fall out of the air with a crazy flop. I built a rustic arch to link a pair of flowerbeds out in front. Two Van Fleet roses climb over it, and this thorny tangle is another favorite nesting-place for mockingbirds. Before the cross-bar became covered by the vines,

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I used to see the male bird prancing absurdly sideways back and forth over the bar with drunken flappings of his wings. Presumably, this was for the diversion of his mate, sitting on her eggs nearby.

A clown by day and a poet in the dark; the two professions are not so far asunder. On still nights and especially if there is moonlight, the mockingbird is likely to sing—but not every night, and not long enough at a time to tire the listener. He is an artist. Also, he is polite; you will hear two mockingbirds singing back and forth, but they do not interrupt each other. One feels that the bird has a soul because he can listen as well as sing. There are sweeter voices than the mockingbird's; it is something back of his singing that makes it so moving. He has many songs, and as with other artists, some of them are trite; it is when he improvises that he seems more than bird. A phrase broken off in the middle; a pregnant silence followed by another careless phrase or two, and several bars of perfect lilting song tossed off as if it was no great matter. Silence; some dreamy murmured notes; another brief flight of song. The singer has forgotten himself; he is merely the vehicle for song. It has a blessed spontaneity, loveliest quality in life or art.

During the long periods that I spend at Charles' Gift alone, the place is so quiet that the wild creatures come in closer and closer. The hedges afford them good cover, and no doubt it is easier to find bugs on a mowed lawn than in the tangled fields. At any rate, no less than four pairs of quail (we call them partridge, or simply "birds") nested around the yard this year. Their liquid calls echoed back and forth all day long; they strutted over the lawn, pecking like chickens, and were almost under

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my feet when I went out. They knew very well that it was the closed season for birds. I noticed that one of the little she-birds was lame. A pellet of lead had nicked her last fall; however, her husband was standing by her, and later she seemed to function all right as a mother.

It was a charming sight when they began to lead out their tiny broods. "Lead," however, is not quite correct, for the chicks do not follow in the tame manner of chickens, but range about, hunting on their own. Though they may be some distance away, the mother still has her eye on them, for if you surprise them, she will instantly, with piteous cries, start running *from* them, trailing a wing in order to persuade you that it would be much easier to catch her than her children. Meanwhile, the chicks have been taught to scatter widely in the other direction and find cover. After quite a while, when mother regards the danger as over, you will hear her softly calling them back.

Once a mowing machine ran over a partridge nest in our field, killing the mother bird. We gathered up seventeen pearly white eggs and put them in a manure pile, and in due course they hatched out. The speckled brown chicks no bigger than the end of your thumb were entrancing. They seemed to spring out of the shell all ready for business; full of the lust of life. I have never seen such little packets of energy. Unfortunately, we didn't know how to feed them; we offered everything we could think of; flies and bugs of various kinds, corn meal, grass seed, but half of the chicks sickened and died. This posed an uncomfortable question; to kill such pretty midgets was unthinkable; yet if we turned them out we feared they would die just the same. We chose

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the lesser of two evils, and turned them out, hoping for the best.

Pheasants are not native to our parts, but from time to time a benevolent game commission liberates a few pairs in the surrounding fields. They added very much to the scene, the lordly male with his sweeping tail feathers; his meek, unadorned mate. There is a proving ground for ordnance at Indian Head many miles away on the Potomac, and it was curious, whenever a big gun was fired, to hear the pheasants rocketing in the fields. They have not thriven; the farmers hate them for no reason except that they are strange. Regular German atrocity stories are circulated of how the pheasants damage the crops, destroy the nests of the partridges, and so on. I suspect that there has been a good deal of surreptitious killing. At any rate, I have not seen a pheasant in many months. The last was a widowed female, who pecked disconsolately in the lawn last spring. She is gone, and there is no longer any rocketing in the fields when a big gun goes off at Indian Head.

The wild rabbits are becoming so numerous around the place as to constitute a problem. When I am alone at Charles' Gift, they use the lawn as if they owned it. It is comical to watch them skylarking in the grass, or pausing to wash their faces gravely. There is one fellow who comes and cuts up all by himself for many minutes at a time, with an absorbed manner as if he were rehearsing a part in the rabbit circus. When the pears were falling, an old grandfather rabbit used to squat under the tree holding a pear between his front paws and nibbling it with closed eyes in supreme enjoyment. When you surprise a rabbit, he crouches very still, hoping to escape observation. If you steal slowly

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closer you will see a look of agonized indecision come into his full bright eye; to stay or to go? Suddenly a spring is released, and he is off across the grass in mad, beautiful leaps. How wonderful, with no effort at all, to be able to jump half a dozen times your own length! I enjoyed these white-tailed neighbors until I discovered that one of them was nibbling off the first shoots of my new roses. Sometimes a shoot would be bitten off in sheer wantonness, and left lying on the ground. In God's name, with all the green stuff there was to choose from, why did they have to pick on the roses I had just bought? Were there not delicious lettuces, young carrots, chickweed and sweet fennel? When Geoff came home from school for a week end, I stationed him with his gun to watch the rose bed. He caught a rabbit in the act and shot him, and my roses have not been molested since.

Occasionally, I see a mink slinking around the out-houses; and in driving at night the headlights will pick up a fat 'possum waddling across the road, or a skunk holding his tail threateningly. A skunk never hurries; he doesn't have to. There are 'coons, too, with sharp childish faces; they are more active. Somewhere along the foot of the river bank at the point, a handsome gray fox with a heavy brush has his lair. Two or three times on my way down to swim I have surprised him on the beach. He is not at all put about by my appearance; trots away over the rocks in no hurry and squats behind a fallen tree where he watches me with an expression of wary disdain. I sit down, too, and we watch each other until he becomes bored and goes on about his business.

So there is plenty of sport of one kind and another, and every white man goes gunning but me. Not that I would appear to condemn the hunters; on the contrary,

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it is a fine thing in the lives of these hard-working men; it keeps something young in them. Take Mr. Ed, for instance; he doesn't care for hunting on land; ducking is his passion. He builds a blind somewhere along the shore, where, with his decoys swimming alluringly out in front, he will crouch for hours on end, with or without success. Mr. Ed has the most lifelike decoys of anybody, which he makes himself, of course. He spends happy hours in shaping and painting them; all the leading varieties of ducks are represented.

Ducking reminds me of the time when my acquaintance with Mr. Ed was new, and I invited him to motor up to Baltimore with me. He had not been to the city for thirty-five years, and I anticipated a good deal of fun in showing him around. In this I was disappointed, for I learned that you never get any change out of Mr. Ed. Under no circumstances would he allow himself to betray surprise or wonder. At this time he was still suspicious of automobiles, and he rode all the way to town sitting on the edge of the seat, chewing his quid with a determined expression and keeping a hand on the door, ready to spring out at the slightest warning. This was before the era of prohibition. I led him first to the bar of the new Southern Hotel, which had very fine panels of Circassian walnut that I thought would interest him. He never looked at them, but marched up to the bar, and, striking it with his fist, demanded two whiskeys. Downing his drink at a swallow, he marched out again, leaving me to follow, and proceeded up the street with long strides, black plush cap pulled firmly over his eyes, and overcoat spread wide to the breeze. We created quite a sensation on Baltimore Street. Every time we came to a bar, Mr. Ed announced in his high-

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pitched voice: "Time for another whiskey!" and marched me in.

He said he wanted to buy some beads and I led him to a five-and-ten. We found the bead counter, and Mr. Ed fingered them over string by string with a disappointed air. "These ain't what I want," he said. "What kind of beads do you want?" asked the contemptuous salesgirl. "Duck-eyes," said Mr. Ed. The girl looked frightened and glanced hastily around for the floorwalker. He came bustling up with his professional air of being equal to anything. Meanwhile, Mr. Ed was repeating with rising annoyance: "I said duck-eyes, *duck-eyes*, DUCK-EYES!" and I feared that a shocking burst of profanity was imminent. The floorwalker was as frightened as the salesgirl. I undertook to explain: "He wants the kind of beads that he can use for the eyes of his decoy ducks." The floorwalker recovered his *sang-froid*. "What you want is poultry supplies," he said. "Try Meyer and Stisser, 32 Light."

Since then Mr. Ed and I have taken many a drive to Baltimore together. He has a son there, and he always has something to take; a jar of oysters; a dressed turkey, a basket of apples, or a little model ship that he has built and rigged for his grandson. Mr. Ed loves to make little ships. In his yard he has a weather vane in the form of four identical little sloops which sail around in a circle, jibing smartly one after another as they cross the wind. It is pretty to watch. The whole apparatus is detachable from its post, so that it may be carried in the house in the event of too strong a wind. Mr. Ed cares for his little ships as if they were real, and only hoists sail when the wind is fair.

One could not have a better companion than Mr.

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Ed on the long drive to the city, for nearly everything he sees reminds him of something else. When we turn out of his road into the hard-surfaced highway which runs here through woods of pine trees fifty to sixty feet high, he says: "In my grandfather's time, all this land was under cultivation. But when the Civil War was over, most of the negroes followed the Northern armies, and the last crop of corn was left standing in the fields. Put me in mind of it some time, and I will show you how the corn furrows are still showing under them tall trees."

A few miles further along, the road dips into a deep bottom, crosses the head of St. Leonard's Creek, and climbs up the other side. "Down yonder to the left on the creek shore," says Mr. Ed, "you can still see the earthworks that was thrown up against the British in 1814."

"What good would a fort be at the head of the creek?" I asked. "There are a hundred places along the shore below where the British could land if they wanted."

"It was a supply depot for Commodore Barney," said Mr. Ed. "It's quite a story. When my grandfather moved into this neighborhood, the war was still fresh in peoples' minds, and many's the time he told me about it when I was a boy. Up in Washington we had a trifflin' gov'ment at the time; they had plenty warning the British were coming, but they didn't pay no heed. And when the British fleet sailed into Chesapeake Bay there was nothing to oppose them but the little companies of militia raised in the counties.

"The British Admiral's name was Coburn, and he had a big ship mounting seventy-four guns, two smaller ships that they called frigates, a brig and a schooner, besides any God's amount of small craft that he captured

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as he went along. Coburn sailed up and down the bay landing wherever he had a mind, and robbing and burning. He didn't call it robbery, but requisitioning, not that it made much difference to them that was forced to give up all they had. Tobacco was what he was after, chiefly. They said he seized thousands of hogsheds and shipped them back to England."

I said: "I'm glad that Charles' Gift escaped the flames."

"In those days the Gantts was living in your house," Mr. Ed went on. "I don't know how they fared. This feller, Coburn, didn't always burn. There was a kind of humor in the man. If the people stayed home when his ships appeared, and entertained him and his officers, he was satisfied to take what he wanted, real polite, and go, but if they was scared and run away from home, he said it was an affront to the British Navy, and he burned down their house and their barns.

"Up in Baltimore they knew they was going to catch it in the end, so the merchants and the people outfitted a fleet of twenty-six barges and raised nine hundred men to fight them, mostly sailors and mates off the ships that was blockaded in Baltimore. And this Joshua Barney was put in command. He was an experienced skipper; been to sea since he was ten year old; was a naval officer and God knows what all, and feared neither British nor devil. When they was ready, he sailed his barges down the bay and waited for the British in the mouth of our river here, the Patuxent. As the British approached, he would run out, have a brush with their small boats, and run in again. Naturally, he couldn't stand up to the big ships. His object was to tempt the British to chase him up the Patuxent, and Admiral Coburn, he fell for

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it. He come into the river with his whole fleet and Commodore Barney, making out to run away upstream, sailed into St. Leonard's and right up to the head of it."

"Wasn't that running into a trap?" I suggested.

Mr. Ed grinned. "That's what Admiral Coburn figured; that he had Barney trapped. That's what Barney aimed to make him think. Coburn couldn't send his big ships into the creek, so he outfitted all the smaller craft he had, and despatched them. That's what Barney had been fishing for.

"Must have been a brave sight when the British come in," Mr. Ed went on. "Would make a fine battle picture in St. Leonard's with its still water and high green shores. According to the story, the British had many more small boats and men than Barney had. They come in with flags flying and bands playing, confident as hell. Of course, there wasn't room to maneuver under sail inside, and all the boats was rowed with oars. The rowing boats towed in two small schooners, each of which had a couple of cannon aboard. Commodore Barney come down the creek to meet them. Some of his larger boats had gone aground in the mud, and he had to leave them behind.

"They met midway in the creek and the battle lasted more than half a day. Right there in our creek. Right near the spot where you and me been fishing for black perch. Right out in front the bank where Dord Melling, the bootlegger's house stands today. The Commodore himself fought one of the barges with twenty men. They say his young son was under fire all day. He rowed a skiff from barge to barge on our side carrying his father's orders. That part made great impression on me

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as a boy, and when I rowed my skiff in the creek I used to play I was young Barney carrying my Dad's orders.

"In the beginning, both sides fought with equal vigor, but in the afternoon the British suddenly gave way, and rowed like hell for their big ships. Commodore Barney followed them right up. The British had a schooner with eighteen guns lying at the mouth of the creek. Their small boats escaped past her and Barney's whole fleet attacked the schooner. They licked her, too, and she took to flight for all of her eighteen guns. Two big ships come up and fired seven hundred shots at Barney's barges, so he had to draw off. But we cut up the schooner so bad they had to beach her there on Peterson's Point. The British set fire to her to keep us from getting anything off her.

"Reckon old Admiral Coburn was laughing out the other side his mouth then; joke was on him. The story is, that he took it out on our side by smashing into more houses and barns up and down the river. They say he broke all the windows and doors and furniture out of sheer deviltry; and ripped open the feather beds and scattered the feathers in the wind."

"I reckon Charles' Gift caught it, then," I said. "It would be the first house he would see."

"Maybe the Gantts was Tories," said Mr. Ed. "There was still plenty Tories in the country in 1814. . . . They burned the Calvert County Courthouse. It stood at the mouth of Battle Creek in those days. Meanwhile, the gov'ment had waked up a little, and they sent six hundred troops, one hundred marines, three big cannon and two small cannon down by road to Barney's camp at the head of the creek. That's when the earthworks were thrown up. Barney sneaked the two small cannon down

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the creek, and got them mounted on that high bluff at the mouth of the creek, about where Frank Hampton's stable stands now. He built a furnace to heat the shot and the British never got on to what was doing until he suddenly opened fire on their ships. I reckon Admiral Coburn cussed plenty. He hoisted sail and dropped down below Point Patience.

"It was only a temporary advantage for our side," Mr. Ed went on, with a shake of the head. "Later in the summer a bigger fleet come up the bay and joined with Coburn. The British then had near fifty sail, large and small. There was three thousand soldiers aboard, and the high Admiral was called Cochrane. When they come, Barney sallied out and stung them. Cochrane got him surrounded at last, but Barney diddled him; he burned his barges and got clear away with all his men to join the fight at Bladensburg.

"Cochrane put his whole force ashore at Benedict and they marched on Washington. Even after all that warning, the Gov'ment was caught napping. They didn't think the British would dast attack our capital. When it was too late, they collected a scratch force at Bladensburg, and at that, it is said they outnumbered the British. But they wouldn't stand. Only Barney's sailors fought like men. The others run away, and so did the Gov'ment in Washington. The British marched in and burned the Capitol and the White House and the Navy Yard, and then marched back to their ships at Benedict. They say the British themselves was scared as hell the whole time, not believing it possible there was no army after them. . . . 'Tis not a part of history we can brag about," Mr. Ed concluded. "Would have been a different story if Gen'ral Jackson had been there."

A few miles further, passing through Prince Fred-

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erick, our county seat, Mr. Ed casts his eyes critically over the war memorial. This is a great upright slab of bronze with a draped lady carved upon it in high relief. It blocks the cement walk leading up to the door of the courthouse, and one passes to one side or the other. "Once in court week when that thing was new," says Mr. Ed, "I seen Sam Ludwell, the lawyer, making haste to court to plead a case. Sam is brother to Joey Ludwell, and John and Claude, and George and Ben and Willie. Sam was going over his case in his mind; you know, wagging his hand like he addressing the bench, and moving his lips. And he run smack into that female yonder and mash his face."

After we pass the invisible line of Anne Arundel County, Mr. Ed's attitude changes. He becomes watchful, critical or grudgingly approving; he is among foreigners. "They're planting too God-damn much tobacco up here," he says. "They'll glut the market next year." Or: "Look at that field of corn. The stalks ain't no thicker than my thumb. I would be ashamed to let that be seen growing from the public road." Of cowpeas cut and cocked in the field he says with a grin: "He let 'em stay out too long and the rain got 'em. They've all turned black. Only fit to be plowed under now." We pass some long rows of beehives on the side of a slope. "Now that feller is smart," he says jealously. "I mind the first time we drove by here years ago, he on'y had but the one hive, and now he's got thirty-forty. And never cost him a cent. He watch when they swarm and have another hive ready. Anybody could do that if he was smart."

I say, just to draw him: "The fields up here seem to be a lot cleaner than ours."

"They got to work harder than us," says Mr. Ed calmly, "because their land's no damn good."

Chapter XIX

A WHILE AGO WE ATTENDED A DANCE IN THE LITTLE HOTEL at Point Patience. It was the sort of rowdy affair that one takes for granted nowadays. How a parent dreads to introduce his young to such a world! However, there is nothing you can do about it; if you have brought them into a rowdy world, they have to learn to live in it. As they grow up, you begin to perceive with relief that they can accommodate themselves to rowdiness without surrendering to it. This dance was not a local affair, being held on the occasion of the annual motorboat race at the island, which had attracted many strangers. Our dances for young people are better-behaved. On Saturday nights, of the two dance halls in the county, I notice that they choose the more decorous. All they want is to dance.

Rowdy affairs are amusing to watch for a while; the whipped-up hysteria of the musicians and their efforts to infect the dancers! One can admire the artist who sets out to do this without losing a grip on himself, but what of the cheaper variety who abandons all restraint? What does he feel like afterwards? And the dancers. The fat and the elderly are in the ascendant; red-faced and disheveled, plowing determinedly through the dance in a room lighted by oil lamps on a July night!

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One can understand it, if they appear to be having a good time, but few do. Grim faces, sottish faces are in the majority, with the unconscious look of apprehension that suggests an overtaxed heart. There is nothing new in such a scene. Two hundred years ago Hogarth painted and etched it. Along with the drunken lady vaguely smiling, who delicately puts up her hand when she hiccups; the supercilious youth forever passing in and out of doors or up and down stairs, as if there was no girl present good enough for him, besides other familiar types.

When I was exhausted by the sheer noise, how longingly I thought of the green-shaded lamp at home. On the nights when the whole family goes out sporting, God forgive me, how I purr with satisfaction as I settle down. This night I was elected; I had hours of it to put in yet. Wandering down to the quiet end of the hotel porch, I looked through a window and there, directing operations in the kitchen, I saw my black friend, Annie Oliver. There was nothing hysterical about Annie; I greeted her with the gratitude one feels towards a fixed point in a gyrating world.

Annie was our first cook; she was with us when Mary Ann came. She is associated in my mind with the Casa di Playhouse and its primitive waterworks when that was our kitchen; she brings back the most terrible of all thunderstorms which hung over Charles' Gift for hours, with claps overhead as if the Day of Judgment had come, and great balls of sulphurous smoke drifting past the windows. I see Annie creeping humbly into the big room and sitting on the floor in order to be near other humans. Even then, Annie seemed like an old woman; but there is still a bloom on her black cheek, and she bears

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herself like an African Queen. With her cajoling voice and beautiful courtesy, she lends distinction to any establishment where she works. She has the air of respecting her masters without abating a jot of her own self-respect. The fact that this superb manner is only a front makes her the more lovable. She is an equivocator, a flatterer, a sweeper of dust out of sight. But how she sets you up in your own esteem! She is a cook of the old school; an inheritor of the true Maryland tradition. What rolls! What smothered chicken! What crab soup! She is almost the last of her kind.

When we first knew Annie, she was married to old Tom, who was as charming as she was; a character straight out of a romance of the deep South; bowed, bald and childlike. He became almost incapacitated through age, but it was still pleasant to have him puttering around. And what an air the two of them gave to the place; Annie in the kitchen; Tom in the garden! They had no children of their own and Annie used to spend her substance on her sister Sidney's big brood. She also took care of Aunt Margaret, who was so old all her own folks were dead. "We has to help each other out," Annie would say, in her softly beseeching voice.

After Tom died, she was tempted out into the world by an offer from the proprietor of a tearoom. Gradually her wages were increased until she was earning thirty-five dollars a week, a sum unheard of among the black folk at home. With what a royal air she played Lady Bountiful during those days! After years had passed she came home again, and married another old man who followed her along the roads like a grateful dog. She had to have something to take care of. Now he has died, and she lives alone. I couldn't help wondering

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what Annie thought of that crew in the hotel. She would never have told me. She asked to see the children and they were led up to the kitchen window one by one, while she held up her hands in affected wonder, and made soft-voiced compliments upon their beauty and their breeding.(!)

Long ago, after Annie had left us, her sister Sidney sent one of her children to work for us, a pretty little brown girl who bore the astounding name of Crematory. At least, that was what she called herself, and what the other negroes called her. I couldn't understand it, because both Sidney and handsome John Frank Gross, her husband, were intelligent negroes. Meeting Sidney in the road—she had Annie's gentle, wheedling manner, but not her queenly carriage; Sidney had borne too many children—I said: "Sidney, what for did you give that child such a heathen name; Crematory; where did you get that from?" "'Deed, Mr. Footman, that ain't her name," answered Sidney. "These ignorant niggers can't pernounce it. Her name is Queen Victoria."

Once we had a sultry little creature in our kitchen called Lou, with a deep bosom and a mysterious something about her that brought young men down the lane every night. Lou never turned a finger to attract them. Mute, indifferent, half asleep, she never did anything; she simply and effectually was. More than once, when two young men arrived on the same evening, loud voices rose in the kitchen and I was forced to go in and invite them to leave, a job for which I felt peculiarly unfitted. What should I have done if they had defied me? I was relieved when one of the young men married Lou and took her away.

At another time, we had Annie Tawney who, in her

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thirties, already weighed three hundred pounds and something; the floors gave when she walked. She was a grand cook and very amiable. During her term at Charles' Gift, a famous lady came to lunch, and the establishment was bound to put its best foot foremost. My wife engaged a more personable girl to wait on the table and told Annie to stay in the kitchen. All went well until dessert was served; the pantry door was then thrown back with a sweeping gesture, the floor creaked, and Annie sailed in, like airy, fairy Lillian, balancing on her toes, and holding one hand delicately poised in the air to demonstrate how light she was on her feet. The guests broke down in uncontrollable laughter, and Annie laughed, too, and beat a retreat. When my wife asked her why she had come in when she had been told not to, she said: "'Deed, Miss Gladys, I just want to show the company one wasn't doing for all."

Sarah, the present genius of our kitchen, has nothing of the rogue in her composition. She is over six feet tall and built like a black Amazon; she is so strong and so industrious, she can keep the big house at least fairly clean with no effort at all. Guests are not supposed to examine too closely in the corners. One of the things in Maryland that gave me joy was the escape from a northern tyranny of housecleaning. Sarah comes of a good family, all of whom are ambitious to improve themselves. She is an ardent churchwoman, the getter-up of the cantatas, etc. She speaks with a careful regard for grammar and pronunciation. For years she has been taking piano lessons, and as we possess no piano, has been forced to practice on the edge of the kitchen table. Now she has bought a piano for herself, which she

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keeps at a cousin's house, where she can go and practice during her hours off.

For a long time she kept company with Plug Johnson, the handsomest young black man in the neighborhood, and said to be one of the wildest. They made an odd pair, the circumspect Sarah and the reckless Plug, night after night sitting in the kitchen on two chairs, holding hands, and saying never a word. And after all, nothing came of it. I suspect the strain on Plug was too great. At any rate, while we were sojourning in town, he up and married Flossie, who was more the type of the beguiling Lou. Sarah is now thirty years old and still unmarried, an almost unheard of thing among her race. She does not appear to repine. Perhaps she tells herself that she's too good for these cornfield niggers, and it's true, but they would resent it just the same. Sarah consorts with the dark-skinned élite of the neighborhood, with the Reverend Baugh and his wife, Buena Vista Baugh. Sarah has been with us for fifteen years and I do not know her, but I respect her.

I cannot remember exactly how long Herman has been working at Charles' Gift, and neither can he. He helped build the addition twenty-one years ago, and he was here before that. He must have been seventeen or eighteen years old when he came, and he has scarcely changed at all in appearance. During the first years we had difficulty in understanding each other's speech; my syntax was too elaborate for Herman, and he didn't like to confess it. That difficulty has now disappeared; indeed, it makes me smile nowadays, when I catch him imitating my words and ways. A good, unspoken understanding has slowly grown up between us: I don't ask too much of him and he is grateful for it. Herman is

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even-tempered; very slow; almost completely silent. But he is not at all dumb. He can make or mend almost anything. He keeps the boats in order; he can make a new gate and swing it; he built a new pair of doors for the garage that close perfectly; and he made an entire set of screens for the windows that have been in service for years. His unique merit is, that he will keep plodding along in his own slow way while I am busy at my desk, or, for that matter, while I am in Europe.

He has his faults, of course; he often fails to turn up on Monday mornings when we have most need of him; and he will never question any order I give him. Even when he knows I am telling him wrong, all will be carried out literally to the disastrous end. On the other hand, every day when I forget to tell him things, I receive fresh evidences of his thoughtfulness. For a long time I had difficulty in getting him to care for the flower-beds; I fancy he considered it sissified to fool with flowers; but now when we produce fine blooms, he is as proud as I am. Also, when we are alone together at Charles' Gift, he will sweep, scrub and wash dishes with perfect good humor. On various occasions I have staked him for one thing or another and he has always met his obligations. Once I was shocked to come upon him at Lusby in the company of a car-full of rip-roaring, bedizened black hussies, and he was not at all ashamed, either. But why should he have been?

Years ago, he married a smart and pretty little girl called Lily, and she died. After a long period of widowhood, he has lately taken to himself Nettie, a woman of his own age who washes for us. Nettie, to us, appears like a sullen, inexpressive creature, but there must be something in her. Indeed, I know there is, for I looked

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into their house the other day and was astonished at its neatness and attractiveness. With nothing to go on, Nettie has made him a home. I wish them well.

Here is a letter that Herman wrote me just before I came home this spring. He appears to have had help with the hard words:

Appeal P O

C O Md.

March 25

Dear. Mr. Footner

I were over to charles Gift on the. 22. an bern The Garden off an all So mr. Frank has plow it up.

it is nice wather for plant Seeds. When you order your Fertilizers order me a Bage to plase.

did you take away the Hand Saw when you was down for christmas dont For get to bring it back

Yours Truly,

Herman.

I am shy about generalizing on the negroes. I don't feel that I know them well enough; neither can I take them for granted like those who have been raised among them. There are all kinds of negroes, good and bad, steady and triffin', decent and shameless—just like us! After all, though I have lived among them for twenty-five years, I have only been brought into direct contact with the few who happen to have worked at Charles' Gift. In the beginning the colored people looked on me as an easy mark, and perhaps they still do. I don't resent it. My attempts to placate them were regarded as weakness; there was the glib Nathan White, who, as soon as my back was turned, used to lie down in the tall grass and take a nap; and there was John Watt, another smooth one, who spent several years in putting over on

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me one small scheme and another, until I got on to him, and he transferred his labors to fresh fields.

It was this John who "borrowed" a motorboat from a summer resident, who had laid it up when he returned to the city. John used the boat all winter for his fishing. When the owner returned in the spring, he learned of this, and in a rage he sent a complaint to the authorities that John Watt had operated a motorboat without a license. When a constable appeared at the Watt shack with a warrant for his arrest, his wife said: "He's daid," and put her apron to her eye. Whereupon the constable wrote "Deceased" across the warrant and went away again, and John came out from behind the door.

In the course of years I have learned how the colored folk ought to be handled, but I can't put it into practice myself; you have to be born to it. However, it scarcely matters now, since Herman and Sarah are so faithful. The right way is the way of my breezy neighbor, Mr. Joey Ludwell, who is familiar and jocular with his hands, puts on no side, and, when occasion arises, cusses them out with extraordinary passion. They understand that. It would be too much to say that they love Mr. Joey, but at any rate, he has first pick in the labor market. The wrong way is the way of the Coventons, almost next door to Mr. Joey. On the Coventon place, the negroes are treated with strict justice and a certain reserve, and in consequence the Coventons always have difficulty in procuring sufficient labor. Strictness just doesn't work with negroes; Thomas Jefferson pointed this out in his day and deplored it. They must have a certain leeway to lay off, to talk and fool, to lie in bed on Mondays, or they won't stick. And why in Heaven's

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name should they work to the limit of endurance every day? We only live once.

We have no negro problem in Calvert County. The races are about evenly divided, and since the white man has no reason to fear a negro preponderance, he treats his black brother pretty well. He is allowed to vote, indeed he is paid to vote! and there is an organized school system for his children. True, these schools are maintained out of negro taxes, which is unjust, since we keep him in a position where he can rarely acquire any property to be taxed; still, he is subject to worse injustices elsewhere in our free country. They are a kind and merry people, quick to be pleased, quick to forget pain; and in this simple community they are able to make a life not so different from what they were intended for. Knowing what awaits them in the city, I am depressed when I hear of their migrating.

The church is a big factor in their lives. I do not mean that their actions are governed by religion, but merely that they get a kick out of it. There is always something doing in the colored church up the road; a protracted meeting, a camp meeting, a lodge meeting, a funeral, or a rehearsal for the forthcoming "cantata." One night when I was walking by, I looked in through the open door and saw them leaping and singing a rollicking hymn. I returned about half an hour later and they were still singing the same hymn—or had started it over again.

On the other hand, the childlike negro is not immune to the demoralizing influences that have swept the country since the Great War. Whiskey and the automobile are having their way with him, too. How they acquire cars and keep them running is a mystery. On a

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big day at the church it is almost impossible to get past. Driver for driver, I expect they are as good as we are, but their dilapidated cars constitute a hazard. One evening I was walking up the lane and a young Gross driving a rickety T-model Ford overtook me. He stopped and offered me a lift, and his black face expressed such a naive pride in being able to give a white man a ride, that I had not the heart to refuse, though I had misgivings. We started with a bound, and in less than a hundred yards struck a patch of loose sand at a good clip, whereupon the Ford leaped out of the road, hit a telegraph pole, snapping it off short, and stopped. I reckon it was the shortest automobile ride on record. The driver was not hurt but his car was reduced to scrap. I was thrown sideways against the wheel, and went around for some days with my ribs taped up.

Automobiles and whiskey make a bad combination for white or black. I have in mind about six young Wallaces, with delightful grins, and three tall Bishops, Willie, Edward and Pinckney, superb young negroes. They are all continually passing in and out of the House of Correction with entire unconcern. They are not guilty of major crimes, but mostly of cutting each other, or robbing the till of a store. It is so safe and easy to rob a store! A stretch in jail doesn't do them any good; they come home knowing too much. I do not see any more Annies or Toms in the making, and I am rendered vaguely uneasy by the slack and shameless expressions in some of the young black faces I pass. Perhaps it is due to the example we set!

Who's to say that they are an inferior race? By and large, they get more out of life than we do. Not inferior but different. They have not reasoning brains like ours,

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and sometimes I find myself envying them for it. How blessed not to be nagged by your brain from childhood to age! They are inferior only in the special world that we white people have made. And a good many of us are beginning to suspect that it may not be the best of all worlds. It is conceivable that after we have blown ourselves to hell with our own scientific inventions, the negroes may go on laughing, singing, breeding, enjoying the sun.

Postscript

THE THREE LITTLE GIRLS ARE GROWN UP NOW, AND brother Geoff has become a long-legged creature with a bass voice and a flair for beer jackets. Yet life at Charles' Gift has changed very little, considering the vast changes that twenty-five years have worked in the world outside. The seine-haulers still laboriously draw their net on the beach; in May the soft-crabbers, perched in the bow of a skiff, pole slowly alongshore searching for their shy prey; the trot-liners dip for hard crabs out in the river. A trot-line may be half a mile long, baited every yard with a piece of eel. It is laid down in about twelve feet of water, anchored and buoyed at each end. As the fisherman is propelled slowly along, either by engine or by oar, the line passes over an arm projecting from the side of his boat. The crab hangs on to his piece of eel until the last moment. As he is drawn close to the surface, the fisherman dips him out and pops him into a waiting barrel.

The Rector's Aid Society of our neighborhood continues to function as of yore. The only change I have noticed is that the ladies have now decided to let the closing prayer and hymn follow immediately after the opening ditto, so that they may gossip outside the religious exercises, as it were. They still get up strawberry

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festivals in the spring and oyster suppers in the fall, and Gemmen! how good the food is. I shall never learn to stop eating fried oysters in time. Occasionally, for variety, they give a card party for the church. At the last one I found myself at a table with Mr. Giddy Hind, who is eighty-six, still unmarried, still gallant. My luck was bad and when I picked up my cards, I was moved to exclaim: "What hands!" Whereupon old Mr. Giddy stuck his hands quickly under the table. "I had to help change a tire on the road," he explained deprecatingly.

At the Mutual Tournament last week, the old familiar faces were to be seen up and down the course. It is very satisfying to an ex-city man to find himself in a big gathering where he knows everybody. Makes him feel as if he had a place in the world. Miss Alice Weems, now something over ninety, was there. She surprised me by hailing me as her benefactor. Years ago, she explained, when her sight began to fail, I told her she had something that could never be taken from her, viz. her memories. "You were right," she said solemnly; "I'm living on 'em now!" The young knights charged down the course with the same determined mien they showed in 1908—but not the same knights. Those were serving as Marshals, Heralds and Judges now. Fried chicken, country ham and deviled crabs were served out of doors in the same generous and sloppy style, and tasted as good as ever. At the ball the latest aspirant for political office addressed the successful knights and their ladies on the subject of our fair women, our brave men and the ancient chivalry of Maryland, just as if we had never heard it before. The hall was packed to suffocation, but how young, how young the dancers were! I

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realized sadly that I was the oldest man on the floor. All my contemporaries were on the side lines.

Charles' Gift is still at the end of the road and no stranger passes our door. In all these years I can only remember of one unexplained person coming down the long lane. The telephone immediately began to ring. Miss Sadie was calling her sister, Miss Lydie. "Lydie, there's a strange white man walking down the lane!" "A white man, walking, Sadie? What on earth you reckon he's after?" "I couldn't tell you. Lulie Ludwell phoned he passed by her house half an hour ago. He walk by here without stopping." "Well, I'll be on the watch for him, Sadie." I subsequently found the stranger sitting on my back doorstep. He proved to be a harmless half-wit from St. Mary's, who had rowed across the river and taken a walk.

The telephone plays a large part in the life of our scattered community. There are thirteen subscribers on our line and, of course, listening-in is general. Information gained in this manner is always explained thus: "When I went to use the telephone I just happened to hear so-and-so and so-and-so." At one time, for some reason, a Mrs. Baggott over on the Cove Point road was included on our line. None of us knew her, but she knew all about us. She was a seamstress and it was said she had contrived a harness to keep the receiver at her ear while she worked the sewing-machine. You could hear the machine. Once a telegram came for the Hamptons. Immediately after it had been transmitted over the wire, Mrs. Baggott called up Miss Sophy Hampton. "Oh, Miz Hampton," she said, "Western Union had a telegram for you and I thought you maybe couldn't hear so good on your line, so I took it down. It said:

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'Angela stricken acute appendicitis. Operation at Columbia. She' . . . but I miss the last two words, Miz Hampton." "Thank you," said Miss Sophy dryly, "I heard them perfectly." "How did Angela come out, Miz Hampton?" Miss Sophy, in telling the story, said: "I forgot I was a lady. I said: 'Go to hell!' and hung up."

Country lovers have a hard time talking on the phone. It usually resolves itself into sighs with long pauses between and broken exclamations. It is Nell Tandy, though, who has developed the art of talking on a party-line to the highest degree. She calls up her mother every day to discuss the state of health of their poultry; when they come to personal matters, it goes something like this: "Remember what I told you yesterday, Mamma?" "Which was that, Nell?" "About the you-know behind a certain place in Prince Frederick." "Yes." "Well, it's true, Mamma. I got it direct from Bedry-Pedry today. And the girl's name is the same as the daughter of the woman who lives next to Aunt Mattie in town." "No foolin', Nell! I never would have thought it after the way that girl . . ." "Careful, Mamma. You never know who may be listening." "Who was the boy, Nell?" "Listen carefully, Mamma. You know that big round thing stands in the corner the tool shed like a pitcher, with holes around the top? His name is the same as that." "But which one, Nell? There's so many boys by that name." "You know what you asked me to get you in town next time I go? On Eutaw Street. His name rhymes with that. Do you get it?" "Yes, indeed. Dear! Dear! Such a clean-cut boy!"

Once when I was in New York I consummated the sale of some picture rights. Wishing to convey the glad tidings to the family without broadcasting it to my

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creditors, I telegraphed the wife: "Get a basket ready for the spinach." That stumped the wire tappers!

One day I took down the receiver and heard a little babel of voices on the wire. "There are thirty-blocks to a gallon, Lou." "But Sadie, how we goin' to know how much to order? They won't take any back." "It works out five cents a block, Lydie." "That's half our profit, Sadie, not counting berries." "I'm against buying it." "But Tilly, don't seem fair to ask them that has the cream to supply all." "Others can bake extra cakes to make up, Sadie. As for me, I'll donate my black Hickey to turn anybody's freezer." "Well, for goodness sakes, don't ask Eva to make cream. She boil hers before she freeze it." "I'm putting it to the vote now, Ladies, shall we buy the cream or make it? . . . Lou?" "I say, make it." "Lydie?" "I say buy it." "Tillie?" "I say make it. The boughten stuff ain't fit to put in your mouth!" And so on. The Rector's Aid Society was holding a meeting on the wire.

Mr. Ed is the same Mr. Ed except that the years are slowing him up some. He doesn't walk down so often to look Charles' Gift over and advise me what ought to be done. He is putting on weight; his gaunt face is becoming smooth and rosy; his thick thatch is snowy white. It is harder nowadays to get him started telling stories because he feels that he has given me his whole store. But just a night or two ago a new anecdote came out. We were talking about funerals and Mr. Ed said:

"Years ago there was a farmer up Third District called Rainy Fletcher who did undertaking on the side. Poor white folks had him because he wouldn't charge much. He bought a second-hand hearse with glass sides that was considered real nobby for the time. Well, there was

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a fisherman over at the Flag Ponds named Howard Boone, who come home drunk and drowned in the creek there in six inches water, and they sent for Rainy Fletcher to bury him. Well, after they put him away and the folks gone home and all, Rainy drove back to the house to collect his pay. The Boones was poorer than Job's turkey. Turn out there wasn't a dollar in the house. So Rainy rub his chin and look around the yard. Seen a sound pig running around . . ."

I interrupted Mr. Ed. "What do you mean, a sound pig?"

Mr. Ed articulated very carefully: "A sow and her pigs, I said. . . . So Rainy says to the widow, he says: 'I'll take the sow 'n pigs for my pay. The widow she say all right. So Rainy load the sow 'n pigs in the hearse and drive back up county. Many met him in the road.'"

After Nurse Ellen died, we brought a governess home from England to teach the children, and on a later visit, a second governess. The idea was to teach the young ones to speak agreeably, for the English, whatever one may say, respect their language. As far as this went, the experiment was a failure, for all four children speak pure Maryland, which I am obliged to confess is not a euphonious tongue, combining, as it does, some of the worst features of nasal Pennsylvania and lazy Virginia. Both the young ladies from England expanded wonderfully in the free air of America; the first was a fool and she became the laughingstock of Calvert County; the second was wise and she made good here. Each stayed with us for about two years before being tempted away by a millionaire at a salary four times as great as I was paying her.

When the second governess left us, the big girls were

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ten and nine years old; and going to school could be deferred no longer. For each school year since (except the winter of 1935-36 when we stayed home) we have been forced to take a house in Baltimore. After one uneasy nine months in the city, I have made it my custom to come home in the beginning of April and to stay there until Thanksgiving. The big girls, as their dresses lengthened, began to find it dull at home. They were handicapped because they came between generations in Calvert, and there were no other youngsters of their age. Now that they are completely grown-up, their hearts are turning home again, especially our Phoebe, who never misses a week end if she can help it, and who fairly purrs with satisfaction when she enters the big room. The younger pair have never been alienated from home, because the county musters a gang of between twenty and thirty houligans of their age.

Meanwhile, Charles' Gift is insidiously growing in beauty. It is impossible to say at what moment the change took place, but the planting no longer has any look of immaturity. The ancient house is once again furnished with a proper setting of green. Indeed, it has reached the point where, much against my will, I must begin to thin out. The north wall is completely covered with ivy ten years old, which appears to have been growing there for a hundred; the ugly little Casa di Playhouse is hidden under cascades of honeysuckle; the Dower House veils itself in a cloud of wistaria. This cottage during the summer when the family is at home, serves as my workshop and here these words are written. I sit in the cool shade of the wistaria looking out on a sunlit world. If I were asked to name the fairest

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aspect of Nature, I should say sunshine on leaves and grass. When I go up after work, and at the big house the horizontal rays of the sun are gilding the rich trees from top to bottom, and striking clear across the lawn under their branches, for me it is the last word.

As I suggested in the beginning, Charles' Gift may not have been altogether good for me in a worldly sense, since it is so far out of the current; but it offered what I instinctively craved, an unspoiled countryside, an unsophisticated people, the sea at my door; in one word, simplicity, in a life which had become almost too complicated to bear. Nor have I entirely lost touch with the great world; on my periodical sallies I receive a sharper impact than those who live in it can know. Each trip to New York is freshly thrilling. The noise, the bustle and the crowding intoxicate me more effectively than whiskey. And afterwards, how grand it is to return and mull over the world in quiet!

It is an excellent situation for the novelist. Our little, semi-detached and self-contained county is like a microcosm of the world at large, and I am at the center of it. I survey the whole social scene; I hear about everything that goes on (for nothing can be hidden in such a community), the end as well as the beginning of each story. I see the young ones blossom in beauty and make good or go plumb to hell. One feels most with the latter. I go to the funerals of the old men and listen in the churchyard to what their lifelong neighbors are saying about them. A simple people can be profoundly eloquent. In fact, simple men or men so wise that they have become simple again, are the only ones worth listening to.

THE END

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Acknowledgment

I HAVE NOT READ FAR IN THE FORMAL HISTORIES OF Maryland, because I found after a few trials, that they referred me back to the sources that I had to read, anyway, and it was more profitable to draw my own inferences from the sources. But I wish to acknowledge my debt and my gratitude to *Captains and Mariners of Early Maryland* by Raphael Semmes; *Crime and Punishment in Early Maryland*, by the same; *Narratives of Early Maryland*, edited by Clayton Colman Hall; *The Founding of Maryland*, by Matthew Page Andrews; *Virginia Carolorum*, by Edward D. Neill, and the Maryland Historical Magazine. The grand source book is, of course, the *Archives of Maryland*, which have been printed, collated and indexed to save poor scholars trouble, and are available to all. I also owe much thanks to the efficient and enthusiastic staff of the Enoch Pratt Free Public Library of Baltimore for assistance given.

H. F.

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